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ABSTRACT

Many states have initiated prekindergarten programs to better prepare young children to enter school. A "blueprint for quality" was used as the basis for evaluating state prekindergarten initiatives; the blueprint focused on four components: (1) ensuring the availability of prekindergarten; (2) ensuring high quality prekindergarten; (3) ensuring accessibility of prekindergarten programs; and (4) integrating prekindergarten initiatives with other early childhood programs. The findings indicated that although 42 states now invest in state prekindergarten initiatives, funding in most states is not adequate to meet the need for high quality programs. The majority of states allow participation by a broad range of providers. However, eight states restrict programs to public schools. Most states limit eligibility to children who are low-income or to four year olds. Most states have adopted quality standards addressing some essential quality components. Nevertheless, many state standards do not address the full range of childhood and family needs. States also vary in the degree to which they promote quality through various means. State prekindergarten initiatives are generally structured to provide part-day/part-year programs. A few states either fund and require full-day/full-year services for some families or coordinate resources to provide such programs. Additional barriers remain in a number of states, including transportation and language barriers. In many states, collaborative efforts enable state initiatives to be coordinated with the federal Head Start and child care programs and others. Based on the findings, it was concluded that although states have made significant progress toward the goal of enabling all children to enter school ready to learn, there is still much work to be done. (Evaluation findings and individual state summary pages are appended. Contains 104 references.) (KB)

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STATE PREKINDERGARTEN INITIATIVES 1998–1999

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SEEDS OF SUCCESS

State Prekindergarten Initiatives

1998–1999

Karen Schulman
Helen Blank
Danielle Ewen

CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND
September 1999

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1989, President Bush and the nation's governors met to develop a strategy to improve the nation's education system and the academic performance of our students. This bipartisan group of leaders recognized that the initial step in an education reform plan had to be ensuring that all children enter school ready to learn. They also recognized that prekindergarten plays an essential role in preparing children for school. As a result, the first objective of their plan was that by the year 2000, all children would have access to high quality prekindergarten programs.

In the decade since the education summit, there has been further confirmation of the importance of high quality prekindergarten experiences that prepare children to learn. A recent report by the National Research Council, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, stresses that good child care and early education experiences help ensure that young children have opportunities to build their language and literacy skills so they can enter school ready to learn and to read.[1] In quality prekindergarten classes, children have frequent interaction, conversations, and storytelling time with their teachers. These experiences can help children gain a better understanding of the structure and sounds of words, the meanings of words, and the concept that print conveys meaning—all of which are crucial in developing reading skills.

"I believe my child has learned skills in school that will stay with him forever. Socially he is on target. Emotionally, he is happy and a pleasure to be around. I can't tell you how good it feels to have my child come home and say, 'I'm special, I did good in school today.' The preschool program can mean the difference between a child going into school happy and ready for new challenges or frustrated and unprepared for his or her next twelve years."
—Colorado parent

High quality prekindergarten programs are particularly important for children in low-income families who often lack access to experiences and resources that promote their successful development. The impact that early intervention programs can have on children at risk and their potential for later school success has been demonstrated by numerous studies,[2] including evaluations of state prekindergarten initiatives. Studies of several state initiatives bolster the arguments for providing children with access to quality prekindergarten programs by offering convincing evidence of the benefits of early education for children at risk of school failure.[3] These benefits include higher math and reading scores, stronger learning skills, increased creativity, better school attendance, improved health, and greater involvement by parents in their children's education.

A Decade of Progress, But Still a Long Way to Go

States' increasing investment in prekindergarten initiatives over the past decade demonstrates that many are recognizing the importance of early education in preparing children for school. Since 1991–92,[4] state spending on prekindergarten initiatives has expanded by nearly $1 billion—from approximately $700 million to nearly $1.7 billion in 1998–99, or almost two-and-one-half times as much as at the beginning of the decade.[5] The number of children participating in state-funded prekindergarten programs has increased proportionally, from approximately 290,000 to nearly 725,000.[6]

Some states have developed particularly innovative strategies and made significant investments so that early education experiences are available for young children, especially those most at risk of school failure. A number of states have taken steps to ensure that their prekindergarten programs offer the high quality, comprehensive supports that children and families need. Efforts are also being made to increase access for all children, including those who have parents working full time, those who do not speak English, and those who have special needs. In addition, several states and local communities are

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starting to integrate their prekindergarten initiatives with other early childhood programs—such as Head Start, child care, and programs for children with disabilities and other special needs—to make more effective use of existing resources in helping children and families.

Despite such progress, state spending on prekindergarten initiatives is still not sufficient to ensure that high quality programs are available to all children. As of 1996, only 36 percent of children between the ages of three and five, but not yet in kindergarten, who were living in families earning less than $15,000 were enrolled in public or private prekindergarten.[7] Most existing initiatives serve only a small proportion of the population needing prekindergarten and often fail to offer sufficient assurances that programs are of the quality necessary to foster children's development. In addition, many families continue to find prekindergarten programs inaccessible due to barriers such as lack of transportation or half-day schedules that make it extremely difficult for children to participate if their parents work full time. Too many prekindergarten programs also operate in isolation, rather than coordinating with other programs or resources that would better enable them to provide high quality, comprehensive supports for children and families. Clearly, further investments and programs are essential to ensure that all children enter school ready to succeed.

A Blueprint for Quality Prekindergarten

As states attempt to meet the need for prekindergarten, they can take one of many approaches. Each individual state must determine which strategy enables it to build the strongest prekindergarten initiative possible. There are, however, certain components that are essential if prekindergarten programs are to be able to offer every child who needs it a high quality early education experience. These components, which make up a blueprint for quality prekindergarten, are interrelated and help determine whether prekindergarten initiatives can meet the goal of ensuring that children enter school ready to read and succeed.

Ensuring the Availability of Prekindergarten

State initiatives ensure that prekindergarten programs are available to all children and families when:

- Sufficient funds are allocated to support at least two years of high quality, comprehensive prekindergarten for every preschool-age child who needs it.

- Funding is available to as many communities as possible, with priority given to low-income communities.
- A range of providers (such as child care, Head Start, and public schools) is allowed to receive state prekindergarten funds.
- Funding is provided to support an adequate supply of safe facilities that are tailored to young children's needs.

Ensuring High Quality Prekindergarten

High quality prekindergarten programs ensure that:

- All children are cared for in environments that protect their health and safety, and have experiences that help them develop to their full potential.
- Children receive the attention they need in classes with small group sizes and a limited number of children per staff.
- Children learn from highly qualified teachers who are knowledgeable about the development of young children and who are adequately compensated.
- Children and families with unmet nutritional, health care, and social services needs are provided with supports that are at least as comprehensive as those provided by Head Start. Programs may meet these needs either by working with families directly or linking them to other resources and programs in the community.
- Parents have extensive opportunities to be involved in their children's prekindergarten experience and to participate in parent education and support activities.
- Technical assistance, targeted financial assistance for quality, and regular programmatic monitoring are provided.
- Periodic evaluations are conducted to improve programs and demonstrate results.

Ensuring the Accessibility of Prekindergarten

Prekindergarten programs are accessible when:

- The needs of working families are met. This involves providing full-day/full-year programs, preferably with the child staying at the same site for the entire day so as to minimize disruption. It also involves providing parent education and other parent-focused activities outside of working hours.
- Transportation is available free of charge to families who are unable to provide their own.
- Staff are available to communicate with children whose primary language is other than English and all staff are trained to work with these children and their families.
- Children with disabilities and other special needs have the opportunity to participate in prekindergarten and to receive any necessary supplemental supports through coordination with other programs.
- The core program is offered free of charge. Any fees charged for extended hours are minimal and are waived for very low-income families.

Integrating Prekindergarten Initiatives with Other Early Childhood Programs

Prekindergarten initiatives can effectively coordinate with, and build on, existing early childhood programs in the state and in each community when:

- Local communities have the opportunities and incentives to coordinate their prekindergarten resources with other early childhood programs.
- Community planning efforts are supported through technical and financial assistance.
- State agencies collaborate throughout all stages of developing and implementing the initiative to make efficient use of limited resources.

Issues and Findings

This report examines state prekindergarten initiatives, using the blueprint as a guidepost for evaluating the initiatives' strengths and weaknesses. Most states make some efforts to achieve the goals outlined in the blueprint above. However, as the following analysis indicates, there is still room for improvement.

Defining State Prekindergarten Initiatives

Prekindergarten policies differ from state to state on almost every count, including the original goals, administrative structures, the way in which funds are distributed, the types of agencies operating programs, the eligibility criteria, the quality standards, and the scope of supports provided to children and families. For example, some states simply supplement federal Head Start programs (an approach referred to in this report as "state-funded Head Start models"), while others have developed their own unique initiatives. Some support prekindergarten programs that look much like kindergarten extended to younger children, while others have more comprehensive programs. Despite these variations, the initiatives examined in this report share several common characteristics:*

- The initiatives are state funded.
- The motivation or focus of the initiative is primarily (but not solely) on the education of the *child*. This separates the prekindergarten initiatives from parent education efforts that are primarily aimed at the *parent*. Although some state prekindergarten initiatives include a strong parent education component, this is only one of many components.
- The initiatives serve children in their prekindergarten years—usually ages three and four. Although some initiatives serve a broader age range—children from birth to age five—the initiatives addressed here do not include those serving *only* infants and toddlers.
- At least some of the funds for the initiative support a group learning experience for children for two or more days per week.
- The initiatives are distinct from the state's child care subsidy system, although the prekindergarten initiative may be closely coordinated with the subsidy program (an approach taken in several states).

This definition of state prekindergarten initiatives excludes a range of efforts that help to support the education of children before entering school, including:

- State investments in child care, including efforts to help improve the quality of care through training, wage supplements, and other strategies.
- State investments in programs for infants and toddlers, such as state funding of Early Head Start.
- State efforts focusing on parent education, such as Parents as Teachers.
- State efforts to provide home visits, other than those that are a part of the prekindergarten initiatives themselves.
- State efforts focused solely on the early education of children with disabilities and other special needs.
- Locally and federally funded initiatives that support early childhood education.

The Availability of State Prekindergarten Initiatives

States are expanding opportunities for children and families to participate in prekindergarten by investing in one or more initiatives (see box for definition of state prekindergarten initiatives). However, funding in most states is still not adequate to meet the need for high quality programs.

State Investments in Prekindergarten

- A total of 42 states now invest in state prekindergarten initiatives (Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin). This includes 16 states that invest in multiple initiatives.

- In 1998–99, states invested a total of nearly $1.7 billion in prekindergarten—two and one-half times as much as in 1991–92—and served approximately 725,000 children. However, three-quarters of state spending on prekindergarten was concentrated in just 10 states (California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, and Texas).

- Only Georgia, which has the second highest level of state prekindergarten spending, invests sufficient funds to make prekindergarten available to all children whose families want them to participate.

- For most initiatives, state spending per enrolled pupil is below the level necessary to support a high quality program. As a result, local programs often must supplement state resources with their own funds.

Settings for Prekindergarten Initiatives

The majority of states open up their initiatives to participation by a broad range of providers, including child care programs and Head Start agencies. This approach allows communities to take advantage of existing resources and provides them with flexibility both in meeting their overall need for prekindergarten and in responding to the diverse needs of their children and families. However, a number of states still use a traditional approach that limits programs to the public schools.

- **Using diverse settings.** Multiple types of agencies are allowed to operate programs through 48 initiatives. This includes 31 separate state initiatives and 17 state-funded Head Start models.

- **Restricting programs to public schools.** A traditional model, where only public schools operate programs, is still used for eight state initiatives (District of Columbia, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, New York [Experimental Prekindergarten], Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Wisconsin) and for the District of Columbia's Head Start model.[9] In addition, a number of states that permit multiple types of agencies to operate programs still have only a limited proportion of programs in settings other than public schools (Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Ohio,[10] South Carolina, and Texas). In these states, only schools are allowed to receive direct funding and although they have the option of contracting out for programs, few choose to do so.

Funding for Facilities

The availability of prekindergarten depends on having an adequate supply of safe, high quality space designed to meet the needs of young children. Yet only a few states, such as Connecticut and Massachusetts, invest extensively in building, expanding, and renovating facilities.

Eligibility Criteria for Prekindergarten Children

States often target their limited resources by restricting eligibility for prekindergarten to children who are low-income and/or children who are four years old.

- **Percent eligible served.** While most states limit eligibility for their initiatives to children in low-income families and children with other risk factors, they are still generally not able to serve all eligible children. Tennessee's initiative serves only 2 percent of eligible children and Massachusetts' initiative serves less than one-quarter of eligible children. Still, some states are making efforts to provide prekindergarten to all low-income children. For example, in Ohio, the combination of the state and federal resources allows the state to provide a Head Start early childhood experience for nearly nine out of ten children in poverty.

- **Age limits.** Although children benefit from having a stable early childhood experience over an extended period of time, 18 state initiatives do not permit children to be eligible for more than a year. In contrast, both three- and four-year-olds are eligible for 31 state initiatives (15 separate state initiatives as well as 16 state-funded Head Start models). Eight states serve an even broader age group—for example, children ages birth to five.

The Quality of State Prekindergarten Initiatives

Most states have adopted quality standards that address at least some of the essential components necessary for ensuring a prekindergarten experience that contributes to children's healthy and safe development and prepares them for school. However, many state prekindergarten standards do not address the full range of needs that children and families have, and that affect children's ability to grow and develop. Such needs include proper nutrition, adequate health care, and family supports. States also vary in the degree to which they promote quality through technical assistance, targeted financial assistance, and monitoring efforts.

- **Quality standards.** Eleven state initiatives have only minimal quality requirements, often consisting primarily of child care licensing requirements and/or school codes—neither of which offer sufficient assurance that children will receive a high quality experience—with perhaps only a few additional requirements.

- **Class size and child/teacher ratios.** Most states set requirements for class size and child/teacher ratios at levels recommended by early childhood experts—no more than 20 children per class, and no more than 10 children per teacher. However, 16 state initiatives do not set any class size requirements, and 10 state initiatives fail to limit child/teacher ratios.

- **Teacher qualifications.** Most states require teachers to have credentials demonstrating a background in early childhood education. A few of these states, such as New York, New Jersey, and Oklahoma, offer some flexibility to allow participation by teachers who do not have the particular required credential, but have some relevant training and education, or who are willing to attain credentials within a certain timeframe.

- **Comprehensive services.** While a few state prekindergarten initiatives have detailed guidelines requiring programs to provide comprehensive nutrition, health, and social services, many states do not thoroughly address all of these supports. State-funded Head Start models as well as three separate initiatives (New York's Experimental Prekindergarten Program, Ohio's Public Preschool, and Washington's Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program) have strong comprehensive services requirements that are the same or similar to requirements of Head Start Performance Standards. A number of additional states have some requirements addressing comprehensive services or strongly encourage programs to provide them. Fourteen states do not establish any requirements or offer any encouragement for programs to provide comprehensive services.

- **Parent involvement, education, and support.** Most states require or encourage programs to reach out to parents, yet few make extensive efforts to ensure that programs include parents as full partners in their child's education and help them gain access to the resources they need to support their families.

- **Supporting quality.** Many states are making efforts to promote quality by providing teacher training, technical assistance, support for accreditation, and/or quality enhancement grants.

- **Monitoring.** Twenty-one state prekindergarten initiatives do not require sufficient monitoring to ensure that prekindergarten programs are providing high quality experiences for children. They either fail to ensure any state-level monitoring or only require written reports from programs but not on-site visits to observe classrooms.

The Accessibility of Prekindergarten

Families often face numerous practical barriers that can prevent them from participating in prekindergarten initiatives, even if they are eligible to participate and there are programs available in their community. For example, a program may not offer a full-day schedule for working parents, may not have staff who speak the family's language, or may not provide transportation. Some states have been more successful than others in addressing these barriers.

Meeting the Needs of Working Parents

State prekindergarten initiatives are generally structured to provide part-day/part-year programs. This can present a problem for parents working full time, as it requires them to find a child care arrangement for the remainder of the workday and a way to transport their children to child care from the prekindergarten program. Many states are beginning to address this issue, either through the initiative itself or through coordination with other resources and programs.

- **Supporting full-day/full-year programs.** Only two states—Massachusetts and Connecticut—fund and require programs to provide full-day/full-year programs for at least a certain proportion of their families. Seven states have prekindergarten initiatives where programs primarily operate on a school-day schedule of about five to seven hours a day. Thirty-seven initiatives generally support only part-day classes of about two-and-one-half to four hours a day.

- **Coordinating resources for full-day/full-year programs.** While most states do not require or directly fund full-day programs, several states make significant efforts to encourage programs to offer this schedule, often by facilitating coordination with other resources and programs. For example, Maine promotes partnerships between Head Start and child care that allow programs to offer a full-day schedule. The state has helped foster the partnerships by combining its Head Start and child care offices into a single agency and by giving priority to partnerships in distributing child care funds. Maryland allows programs to use some of the expansion funding from a broader school reform effort for extending the length of the program day. The state also helps parents access this care by disseminating resource and referral information about child care to all prekindergarten sites.

Removing Other Barriers to Access

Many states have adopted strategies to make prekindergarten accessible to all families, but some barriers remain in a number of states.

- **Transportation.** State-funded Head Start models require programs to provide transportation, but only six of the other state initiatives have transportation requirements. This lack of transportation assistance makes participation difficult for the many families who do not have their own vehicles or access to public transportation.

- **Language barriers.** Seven state prekindergarten initiatives, as well as the state-funded Head Start models, have strong provisions addressing the needs of children and families who do not speak English as their primary language. In a number of other states, programs are not required to address the language needs of their children and families, but local programs are making efforts on their own initiative. Such efforts include hiring staff who speak languages other than English and translating program materials.

- **Children with disabilities and other special needs.** States are coordinating their prekindergarten initiatives with other programs and resources to serve children with disabilities and other special needs in integrated settings and ensure that they have any necessary supplementary supports.

- **Fees for prekindergarten.** Most state initiatives provide prekindergarten free of charge so that it is accessible for families. However, five state initiatives require or permit programs to charge parents fees.

"I hope the School Readiness program continues to help people who are in true need of some help and continues to give better futures to the little ones who need it."
—Connecticut parent

Integration with Other Early Childhood Programs

In many states, collaborative efforts at the state and local level are enabling state prekindergarten initiatives to be coordinated with the federal Head Start program and child care programs as well as with other programs designed to help children and families. These efforts allow states to make more efficient use of limited resources in making comprehensive, quality early childhood supports available. A number of states have initiatives that place a particularly strong emphasis on collaboration. Yet, in most states, efforts to coordinate programs are still in their infancy.

- **Requiring local collaboration.** At least 23 states require some form of local collaboration on early childhood programs, including 11 that require an advisory council or team in each community receiving state prekindergarten funds.

- **Making local collaboration a primary focus.** Connecticut and Massachusetts have incorporated strong requirements for local planning directly into their prekindergarten initiatives. California's Children and Families Initiative and North Carolina's Smart Start program, which do not focus solely on prekindergarten, are also strongly grounded in a community planning approach. In these states, various members of each community, such as parents, teachers, child care providers, social service workers, health care providers, business representatives, community leaders, and other groups and individuals, come together to determine how their resources can be used to most effectively meet their community's needs.

- **State-level collaboration.** More than three out of four states with prekindergarten initiatives indicated that they have some type of state-level efforts to coordinate the prekindergarten initiative with other early childhood programs. These interagency coordination efforts range from joint planning in the initial stages of developing a prekindergarten initiative, to sharing of information about the children and families the various agencies serve and the programs they fund, to joint sponsorship of trainings or conferences, to joint funding for comprehensive services, to interagency councils for addressing ongoing concerns.

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Nurturing the Seeds of Success

In the past decade, states have made significant progress toward the goal of enabling all children to enter school ready to learn. However, there is still much work to be done. As this report indicates, too many children lack access to a quality prekindergarten program. Too many programs are not structured to meet the varied needs of children and families. Not every state initiative has the quality requirements in place to ensure that children receive a successful early education experience. In the next decade, states should move forward to build on their investments and expand their commitment to early learning so that every child in every state receives the strong start they need to succeed.

Key Findings

- Forty-two states invested a total of nearly $1.7 billion in prekindergarten initiatives in the 1998–99 school year and served approximately 725,000 children.
- While the size of individual state investments varied enormously, the largest per-capita support (the total amount of state spending per preschool-age child in the state) was provided by Connecticut, District of Columbia, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Ohio, and Oklahoma.
- Eighteen of the state prekindergarten initiatives are state-funded Head Start models, which are characterized by their adherence to Head Start Performance Standards.
- Most state initiatives allow programs to be operated by agencies other than public schools, including Head Start and child care programs, but nine state initiatives use a traditional model where programs may only be operated by the public schools.
- Georgia is the only state that provides sufficient funding and establishes policies to serve all children whose families want them to participate. Most states target their initiatives to children considered to be at risk of school failure.
- Eighteen state initiatives only allow four-year-olds to participate. In contrast, both three- and four-year-olds are eligible for 31 state initiatives (15 separate state initiatives as well as 16 state-funded Head Start models). Eight states serve an even broader age group—for example, children ages birth to five.
- While most states have put in place quality requirements specific to their prekindergarten initiatives, 11 state initiatives have only minimal quality requirements, often consisting primarily of child care licensing requirements and/or school codes.
- Although a few state initiatives have detailed guidelines requiring programs to provide comprehensive nutrition, health and social services, most states do not thoroughly address all of these supports.
- Thirty-seven state prekindergarten initiatives support part-day classes of only two-and-one-half to four hours a day. However, many of these initiatives coordinate with other resources to provide full-day programs (eight to 12 hours) that meet the needs of working parents.
- All state-funded Head Start models require programs to provide transportation, but only six of the other state initiatives have transportation requirements.
- A number of states have initiatives that place a strong emphasis on collaboration with other early childhood programs.

INTRODUCTION

The Importance of Early Education

In 1989, President Bush and the nation's governors met to develop a strategy to improve the nation's education system and the academic performance of our students. This bipartisan group of leaders recognized that the initial step in an education reform plan had to be ensuring that all children enter school ready to learn. They also recognized that prekindergarten plays an essential role in preparing children for school. As a result, the first objective of their plan was that by the year 2000, all children would have access to high quality prekindergarten programs.

In the decade since the education summit, there has been further confirmation of the importance of high quality prekindergarten experiences that prepare children to learn. A recent report by the National Research Council, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, stresses that good child care and early education experiences help ensure that young children have opportunities to build their language and literacy skills so they can enter school ready to learn and to read.[1] In quality prekindergarten classes, children have frequent interaction, conversations, and storytelling time with their teachers. These experiences can help children gain a better understanding of the structure and sounds of words, the meanings of words, and the concept that print conveys meaning—all of which are crucial in developing reading skills.

Good child care and early education experiences help ensure that young children have opportunities to build their language and literacy skills so they can enter school ready to learn and to read.

Research demonstrates that high quality early care and education experiences have positive effects on the academic performance of all children:

- A major study has been following a group of children to compare the development of children in high quality child care with that of children in lower quality child care. Researchers have thus far tracked the children's progress from age three through second grade. At the end of this most recent study period, children in high quality care demonstrated greater mathematic ability, greater thinking and attention skills, and fewer behavioral problems. These differences held true for children from a range of family backgrounds, with particularly significant effects for children at risk.[2]

- The latest findings from a long-term study of children from socially and racially diverse backgrounds show that the quality of care affects children's learning ability. The study found modest but significant differences in school readiness scores of children in high quality care and those in low quality care, with children who had attended high quality programs more likely to perform above average. The children in high quality care also scored higher in their ability to express and understand language.[3]

Importance of Early Education for Children At Risk

While a high quality prekindergarten experience benefits all children, it is particularly important for children at risk of school failure. Over half of children under 18—38.1 million children—have one or more risk factors that jeopardize their chances for success in school and in life. More than 9 million of these children have *four* or more risk factors.[4] These children live in families with incomes below the poverty line, have parents who lack a high school education, live in households where no parent has full-time employment, live with a single parent or without parents, are in families receiving welfare assistance, and/or lack health insurance coverage.

Several studies have indicated that children living in low-income families, one of the primary risk factors, are less likely than their peers to enter school with the language skills they need to learn to read. Research suggests that:

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- **Low-income children may have a more limited vocabulary.** A study that followed children over a three-year period found that at age three, children from families receiving welfare had less than half the number of words in their vocabulary as children from professional families. This gap grew over time, and by first grade the children from families receiving welfare had one-quarter as many words as children from professional families.[5]

Several studies have indicated that children living in low-income families are less likely than their peers to enter school with the language skills they need to learn to read.

- **Low-income children may be read to less often.** A study of families in 13 states found that one out of four children ages one to five living in low-income families (families with income below 200 percent of the poverty level) were read to or told stories fewer than three days per week, as compared with only one out of 10 children in families with higher incomes who were read to this infrequently.[6]

- **Low-income households may have fewer books.** A study of primarily low-income families found that over half the households had fewer than 10 children's books, and almost a quarter of these homes contained fewer than 10 books total.[7]

A lack of opportunities to develop language skills, combined with a lack of supports such as health care and proper nutrition, place children from low-income families at greater risk of developing a variety of cognitive, behavioral, and physical difficulties. As a result, low-income children are more likely than other children to have learning disabilities, need special education, repeat grades, and score lower on tests.[8] Early education can help children living in low-income families or facing other risk factors overcome these disadvantages. It can offer children exposure to rich language environments as well as educate parents about how to better support their child's language development.

The impact that early intervention programs can have on children at risk and their potential for later school success has been demonstrated by numerous studies,[9] including evaluations of state prekindergarten initiatives. Studies of several state initiatives bolster the arguments for providing children with access to quality prekindergarten programs by offering convincing evidence of the benefits of early education, particularly for children at risk of school failure. (See Appendix A for more detailed descriptions of individual evaluations

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"This program is a great way for my child to meet future classmates, to learn new vocabulary each week and become more observant of his world. It made him a better thinker!"
—Minnesota parent

conducted in Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Maryland, Michigan, Texas, and Washington.) The studies demonstrate that:

- Children who have attended prekindergarten perform better on tests of reading and math skills than children with similar backgrounds who have not attended.
- Children who have participated in a prekindergarten program are more enthusiastic about school and more likely to have good attendance records.
- Children who have attended prekindergarten are less likely to be held back a grade or require special education services in elementary school.
- Children who have attended prekindergarten are less likely to suffer health problems.
- Parents of children who have participated in prekindergarten are more likely to be involved in their children's education.
- Prekindergarten makes a positive contribution to several aspects of children's development, including their ability to retain learning, think imaginatively and creatively, and show initiative.

A Decade of Progress, But Still a Long Way to Go

The increasing focus by researchers, policymakers, and the public on the benefits of early childhood education has led to growing investments in prekindergarten at the state level throughout the 1990's. Since 1991–92,[10] state spending on prekindergarten initiatives has expanded by nearly $1 billion—from approximately $700 million to nearly $1.7 billion in 1998–99, or almost two-and-one-half times as much as at the beginning of the decade.[11] The number of children participating in state-funded prekindergarten programs has increased proportionally, from approximately 290,000 to nearly 725,000.[12] Part of the increased spending and enrollment is accounted for by new initiatives that have been launched in 17 states since 1991–92 (Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Virginia.)[13]

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In 1998–1999, 42 states invested nearly $1.7 billion in prekindergarten initiatives.

Many states have developed innovative strategies and made significant investments so that early education experiences are available for young children, particularly those most at risk of school failure. A number of states have taken steps to ensure that their prekindergarten programs offer the high quality, comprehensive supports that children and families need. Efforts are also being made to increase access for all children, including those who have parents working full time, those who do not speak English, and those who have special needs. Several states and local communities are starting to integrate their prekindergarten initiatives with other early childhood programs—such as Head Start, child care, and programs for children with disabilities and other special needs—to make more effective use of existing resources.

Despite such progress, evidence suggests that states will still fall short of reaching the governors' objective of having prekindergarten available to all children by the year 2000. As of 1996, less than half of children between the ages of three and five, and not yet in kindergarten, were enrolled in public or private prekindergarten.[14] Children in low-income families have particular difficulty getting access to prekindergarten. Only 36 percent of children between the ages of three and five, but not yet in kindergarten, who were living in families earning less than $15,000 were enrolled in prekindergarten. This compares with 61 percent of children the same age whose parents earned $50,000 and above.

State spending patterns also reveal the need for additional investments in prekindergarten. About three-quarters of state prekindergarten funding is concentrated in just 10 states. Most existing initiatives serve only a small proportion of the population needing prekindergarten. The initiatives also often fail to offer sufficient assurances that programs are of the quality necessary to foster children's development. In addition, many families continue to find prekindergarten programs inaccessible due to barriers such as lack of transportation or half-day schedules that make it extremely difficult for children to participate if their parents work full time. Too many prekindergarten programs also operate in isolation, rather than coordinating with other programs or resources that would better enable them to provide high quality, comprehensive supports for children and families. Clearly, further investments and programs are essential to ensure that all children enter school ready to succeed.

About This Report

This report examines the extent to which state prekindergarten initiatives are enabling children and families to gain access to high quality, comprehensive early childhood education. It illustrates the steps that have been made over the past decade and discusses what further steps are necessary to ensure that all children are not only able to participate in prekindergarten programs but also that these programs give children the strong start they need to succeed in school.

Defining State Prekindergarten Initiatives

Prekindergarten policies differ from state to state on almost every count, including original goals, administrative structures, eligibility and targeting provisions, and the scope of supports provided to participating children and their families. For example, some states simply supplement federal prekindergarten programs such as Head Start, while others have developed their own unique initiatives. Some support prekindergarten programs that look much like kindergarten extended to younger children, while others have more comprehensive programs. Despite these variations, the initiatives examined in this report share several common characteristics:[15]

- The initiatives are state funded.
- The motivation or focus of the initiative is primarily (but not solely) on the education of the *child*. This separates the prekindergarten initiatives from parent education efforts that are primarily aimed at the *parent*. Although some state prekindergarten initiatives include a strong parent education component, this is only one of many components.
- The initiatives serve children in their prekindergarten years—usually ages three and four. Although some initiatives serve a broader age range—children from birth to age five—the initiatives addressed here do not include those serving *only* infants and toddlers.
- At least some of the funds for the initiative support a group learning experience for children for two or more days per week.
- The initiatives are distinct from the state's child care subsidy system (although the prekindergarten initiative may be closely coordinated with the subsidy program).

This definition of state prekindergarten initiatives excludes a range of efforts that help to support the education of children before entering school, including:

- State investments in child care, including efforts to help improve the quality of care through training, wage supplements, and other strategies.
- State investments in programs for infants and toddlers, such as state funding of Early Head Start.
- State efforts focusing on parent education, such as Parents as Teachers.
- State efforts to provide home visits, other than those that are a part of the prekindergarten initiatives themselves.
- State efforts focused solely on the early education of children with disabilities and other special needs.
- Locally and federally funded initiatives that support early childhood education (see box).

The Structure of the Report

Part I of this report provides an *overview* of state prekindergarten initiatives. Chapter 1 offers a general description of the various approaches that states are taking in supporting prekindergarten. Chapter 2 provides a blueprint outlining the components of a quality, comprehensive prekindergarten initiative. These components are used throughout the remainder of the report to assess each of the state initiatives.

Part II examines the *availability* of prekindergarten programs. This section includes a discussion of how much funding is provided for prekindergarten (Chapter 3), how funds are distributed to programs (Chapter 4), what types of agencies are eligible to operate prekindergarten programs (Chapter 5), what efforts are made to support quality prekindergarten facilities (Chapter 6), and who is eligible for prekindergarten initiatives (Chapter 7).

Part III evaluates state efforts to ensure the *quality* of prekindergarten programs. Chapter 8 provides an overview of states' quality standards for prekindergarten. Chapter 9 examines several elements of classroom quality: class size, child/staff ratios, teacher qualifications, and curriculum. Chapter 10 discusses comprehensive services such as nutrition, health care, and social services. Chapter 11 addresses parent involvement, education, and support. Chapter 12 discusses how states support quality, through targeted financial assistance, technical assistance, and monitoring.

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Federal Programs and Local Prekindergarten Initiatives

This report examines the early education experiences available to children in each state through *state*-initiated prekindergarten programs, but this does not provide a complete picture of the prekindergarten resources available in each state. In addition to state initiatives, prekindergarten is also supported through federal programs and local initiatives. For example:

- The federal Head Start program provides funds directly to local agencies to support prekindergarten for preschool-age children living in poverty. In 1998, federal funding for the program was $4.3 billion and over 822,000 children were served.

- Federal grants are provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 619 to support prekindergarten programs for children with disabilities and other special needs. In 1998, federal funding for the 619 Preschool Program was $374 million and approximately 572,000 children were served.

- Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act provides federal funds to high-poverty school districts for programs that help children succeed in school. Districts may choose to use these funds to support prekindergarten programs. In 1996–97, there were a total of over 260,000 children being served by Title I prekindergarten programs.[16]

- Local communities often fund prekindergarten initiatives as well, through tax levies, parent fees, foundations, and other sources. Most states do not collect complete data on these local efforts, but many have some information available. About one-half of the states with state prekindergarten initiatives mentioned that they had at least a few communities providing prekindergarten programs through local initiatives (either instead of or in addition to those supported by other resources). For example, in Ohio, there are tuition-based prekindergarten programs within 35 school districts under local boards of education.

Some of these funding streams, and how they interact with the state initiatives, are discussed in this report. However, the report does not provide an in-depth analysis of the full range of federal and local prekindergarten programs available to children in each state.

Part IV examines the way in which states ensure the *accessibility* of prekindergarten programs. Chapter 13 discusses how states are meeting the needs of working parents. Chapter 14 provides information on transportation policies. Chapter 15 addresses efforts to help families who do not speak English as their primary language. Chapter 16 focuses on how prekindergarten programs are coordinated with other programs to make services accessible for children with disabilities and other special needs. Chapter 17 addresses state policies on parent fees.

Part V looks at ways in which states are trying to *integrate* their prekindergarten initiatives with other early childhood programs, through local-level collaboration efforts (Chapter 18) and state-level collaboration (Chapter 19).

Methodology

The information for this report was collected from summer 1998 to mid-1999 through in-depth telephone interviews with state prekindergarten administrators. The administrators were given an opportunity to verify the information provided. Additional information from written materials, including reports and fact sheets, was used to supplement the information collected in the interviews. We tried to obtain as complete a picture as possible of each state prekindergarten initiative. In addressing each of the various components of the initiatives, we have described numerous examples of individual state policies; other states may have similar policies that are not discussed here because they were not reported to us.

PART I

Overview of State Prekindergarten Initiatives

Over the last decade, states have increasingly recognized the importance of offering high quality early childhood programs to three- to five-year-olds to help ensure that children come to school ready to learn. Prekindergarten initiatives have been created and expanded so that 42 states now support some type of initiative, investing nearly $1.7 billion and reaching approximately 725,000 children. Although prekindergarten programs have been widely accepted and implemented, they vary significantly and thus cannot be defined by a single approach.

Some of these initiatives are noteworthy because of their level of investment or their design. States have begun to employ a variety of innovative strategies to make prekindergarten widely available to children and families, to ensure that all programs offer a high quality experience, and to provide greater access to prekindergarten programs to underserved or unserved populations. They are also adopting approaches to involve the entire early childhood community as well as other interested individuals and groups in planning and implementing prekindergarten initiatives to avoid duplication and to help better meet the needs of families and children.

Each individual state must determine which strategy enables it to build the strongest prekindergarten initiative possible. There are, however, certain components that are essential if prekindergarten programs are to be able to offer every child who needs it a high quality early education experience. These components, which make up a blueprint for quality prekindergarten, are interrelated and help determine whether prekindergarten initiatives can meet the goal of ensuring that children enter school ready to read and succeed.

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This section offers a broad description of state prekindergarten initiatives, including:

- State Models for Prekindergarten
- A Blueprint for Quality Prekindergarten Initiatives

State Models for Prekindergarten

Four out of five states currently fund state prekindergarten initiatives, demonstrating the widespread support for prekindergarten. Many states invest in more than one initiative. These initiatives are all basically similar in that they offer a regularly scheduled group experience for young children to help them learn and develop before entering elementary school. However, beyond this fundamental commonality, there is often little resemblance among various initiatives. Some are limited to public school settings, while others are offered in a variety of settings, including Head Start and child care. Some set standards that help ensure a high quality experience for children, while others require programs to meet only minimal state child care licensing regulations or school codes. Some offer an education-focused experience that is much like kindergarten, while others take a comprehensive approach in meeting children's full range of nutritional, health care, and social services needs. Some support a part-day program, while others are designed to provide full-day programs so that the child care needs of parents working full time are addressed. Some initiatives function independently, while others are closely interconnected with a variety of other programs and resources in each community.

States Investing in Prekindergarten

A total of 42 states now invest in state prekindergarten initiatives. This includes Alabama,[17] Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois,[18] Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri,[19] Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island,[20] South Carolina,[21] Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. (For the purposes of this report,

the District of Columbia is counted as a state.) (See Table 1 for a listing of these initiatives and information on state funding and enrollment.)

Sixteen of these states have two initiatives (Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida, Hawaii, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Washington, and Wisconsin). Most states with two initiatives supplement federal Head Start funding as one of their two efforts.[22] A state's funding for Head Start may be more or less than its funding for its separate initiative, depending on which approach the state views as its best opportunity for making high quality prekindergarten available. In Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Washington, state spending for Head Start is dwarfed by spending for the separate initiative. In contrast, Maine and Ohio invest more in Head Start than in their separate initiatives.

Florida and New York are the only states with two initiatives that are *not* investing in Head Start. Each of these states targeted its original initiative to a narrow group of children—in Florida's case, children of migrant workers and in New York's case, children in low-income families—and then adopted its second initiative in an effort to expand the availability of prekindergarten to a broader population.

Nine states do not currently fund any prekindergarten initiative (Idaho, Indiana, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming).

The Diverse Array of Prekindergarten Approaches

In designing its prekindergarten initiative, a state may adopt one of several approaches, such as a Head Start-based, school-based, or community-based model. It may also take a broad-based approach that offers a variety of supports to children of a wide age range. While many state initiatives can be at least partially described by one of these models, most cannot be thoroughly defined by any single model. Initiatives following the same basic model will have certain characteristics in common, but will often differ from one another in other ways, such as in the settings where the prekindergarten program is provided, the method for distributing funds, eligibility guidelines, quality requirements, or length of day. As a result, to gain a full understanding of each initiative, they must be analyzed across the range of characteristics that are discussed throughout the remainder of this report.

Table 1. State Prekindergarten Initiatives: State Funding and Number of Children Served

State	Program	State Spending 1998-99	Number of Children Served 1998-99
Alabama	Preschool Collaboration Project	$690,000	1,000
Alaska	Alaska Head Start Program (State-Funded Head Start Model)	$5,489,951	725
Arizona	Early Childhood State Block Grant* (Prekindergarten Component)	$10,013,423	3,482
Arkansas	Arkansas Better Chance*	$10,000,000	9,048*
California	State Preschool Program*	$127,000,000*	145,719*
Colorado	Colorado Preschool Program*	$21,640,000	8,350
Connecticut	School Readiness and Child Care Initiative	$39,000,000	5,000
	State-Funded Head Start Model*	$5,100,000	n/a
Delaware	Early Childhood Assistance Program (State-Funded Head Start Model)	$3,600,000	843
District of Columbia	Public School Preschool Program	$14,591,000	3,381
	District-Funded Head Start Model	$2,570,000	1,450
Florida	Prekindergarten Early Intervention Program*	$97,000,328	29,639
	State Migrant Prekindergarten Program*	$3,295,172	7,552
Georgia	Prekindergarten Program for Four-Year-Olds	$217,000,000	61,000
Hawaii	Preschool Open Doors	$2,700,000	780
	State-Funded Head Start Model*	$387,387	229
Illinois	Early Childhood Block Grant* (Prekindergarten Component)	$136,000,000	50,000
Iowa	Comprehensive Child Development Program Shared Visions	$7,633,087	2,466
Kansas	Four-Year-Old At-Risk Children Preschool Program	$3,000,000	1,350
Kansas	State-Funded Head Start Model*	$2,500,000	n/a
Kentucky	Kentucky Preschool Program	$39,700,000	15,433
Louisiana	Preschool Block Grant	$6,650,000	3,200
Maine	Two-Year Kindergarten*	$1,300,000*	654*
	State-Funded Head Start Model	$2,329,000	424
Maryland	Extended Elementary Education Program (EEEP)	$19,263,000	9,880
Massachusetts	Community Partnerships for Children	$78,500,000	18,100
	State-Funded Head Start Model*	$6,900,000	450
Michigan	Michigan School Readiness Program*	$67,083,000	21,638
Minnesota	Learning Readiness*	$10,300,000	44,889*
	State-Funded Head Start Model	$18,750,000	3,135
Missouri	Missouri Preschool Project*	n/a	n/a
Nebraska	Early Childhood Projects	$500,000	275
New Hampshire	NH Head Start - State Collaboration* (State-Funded Head Start Model)	$230,000	n/a
New Jersey	Early Childhood Program Aid* (Prekindergarten Component)	$70,000,000	8,197
	State-Funded Head Start Model	$1,400,000	500
New Mexico	Child Development Program*	$1,300,000	1,333*
	State-Funded Head Start Model	$5,000,000	1,300
New York	Universal Prekindergarten	$67,000,000	18,906
	Experimental Prekindergarten*	$50,200,000	19,458
North Carolina	Smart Start*	n/a	n/a
Ohio	Public School Preschool	$17,900,000	7,773
	State-Funded Head Start Model	$92,562,977	22,072
Oklahoma	Early Childhood Four-Year-Old Program*	$36,500,708	16,678
	Head Start State-Appropriated Funds* (State-Funded Head Start Model)	$3,316,918	n/a

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Table 1. State Prekindergarten Initiatives: State Funding and Number of Children Served *(continued)*

State	Program	State Spending 1998-99	Number of Children Served 1998-99
Oregon	Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten* (State-Funded Head Start Model)	$16,272,167	3,064
Pennsylvania	Education Aid for Kindergarten for Four-Year-Olds*	$5,700,000*	2,979*
Rhode Island	Early Childhood Investment Fund*	—	—
	State-Funded Head Start Model*	$1,965,000	400
South Carolina	Early Childhood Program (Half-Day Child Development Program)	$22,356,688	16,000
Tennessee	Tennessee Early Childhood Education Pilot Program	$3,100,000	600
Texas	Public School Prekindergarten	$235,000,000	123,859
Vermont	Early Education Initiative*	$1,315,000	1,097*
Virginia	Virginia Preschool Initiative	$23,500,000	5,811
Washington	Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program	$28,897,592	8,098
	Head Start State Match Program* (State-Funded Head Start Model)	$470,000	n/a
West Virginia	Public School Early Childhood Education	$6,232,702	5,656
Wisconsin	Four-Year-Old Kindergarten	$19,800,000	9,550
	State-Funded Head Start Model	$4,950,000	1,187
TOTALS	Number of Initiatives: 58	$1,675,455,100	724,610

General Notes: Data on spending and enrollment were collected through interviews with state administrators by CDF in 1998 and 1999. Data are provided as they were reported by the state. Some figures may be rounded or estimated. If a state was unable to provide data for the 1998-99 school year, the data year is indicated in the individual initiative's footnote. See footnotes of initiatives marked by * for further explanation.

n/a: Not available (See footnotes of individual initiatives for further explanation.)

Arizona (Early Childhood State Block Grant): The data provided here are only for the prekindergarten component of the block grant, not the entire block grant.

Arkansas (Arkansas Better Chance): Enrollment data are for 1997-98. Data for 1998-99 are not available, but the state estimates that enrollment was approximately the same. The enrollment total includes 7,999 children who attended for a full school-year and 1,049 who only attended during the summer.

California (State Preschool Program): Enrollment and funding data are for 1997-98. There may be some duplications in the enrollment count.

Colorado (Colorado Preschool Program): The initiative also supports 500 full-day kindergarten slots. The enrollment total provided in the chart includes only those children in prekindergarten. The state funding total provided in the chart is a state estimate of the amount of total state funding for the initiative spent on prekindergarten.

Connecticut (State-Funded Head Start Model): The state's Head Start model provides full-day funding for 440 children and funds to extend part-day programs to full-day for additional children (the state was unable to provide data on the number of children for which the state provided extended-day funding).

Florida (Prekindergarten Early Intervention Program): Figure provided for number of children is the number of full-time equivalent slots.

Florida (State Migrant Prekindergarten Program): The enrollment total includes 6,435 regular school term slots and 1,117 summer term slots. The total may include some duplication, since children may attend both during the school and summer terms. The enrollment count includes some children who are receiving supplementary services only, and who are not enrolled in a prekindergarten program that meets regularly.

Hawaii (State-Funded Head Start Model): State funds are used to provided extended-hours for children in Head Start. Children counted in the enrollment total have their participation in the core part-day program supported by federal Head Start funds.

Illinois (Early Childhood Block Grant): Data on the number of children served and state funding were calculated by CDF using estimates provided by the state. In 1998, the state combined its prekindergarten initiative with two other initiatives into a block grant with an overall funding level of $154.6 million, an increase of 15 percent over the total funding for the three programs in 1997-98. The figure for state spending provided here is based on the state's assessment that spending on the prekindergarten component increased by at least 10 percent over the 1997-98 funding provided for prekindergarten ($123.4 million) when it was a separate initiative. Enrollment was assumed to increase proportionally.

Kansas (State-Funded Head Start Model): State funds for Head Start were appropriated for 1998-99, but have not yet been distributed.

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Table 1. State Prekindergarten Initiatives: State Funding and Number of Children Served *(continued)*

Maine (Two-Year Kindergarten): Enrollment and funding data are for the 1997–98 school year. Data for 1998–99 are not available, but it is likely that enrollment and funding increased, since three or four additional schools were offering programs.

Massachusetts (State-Funded Head Start Model): State funding for the Head Start model includes $5.1 million for teacher salary enhancements and $1.8 million to enable programs to serve additional children. The enrollment figure provided here includes only those children whose participation is supported by the funds that are designated to increase the number of slots, and not children who may benefit from the salary enhancements.

Michigan (Michigan School Readiness Program): The state spending figure does not include funding for evaluation and administration.

Minnesota (Learning Readiness): The initiative funds a range of early childhood services, rather than a standard core program. Therefore, many of the children included in the count for "number of children served" may be in an early childhood program where only their supplemental services, such as health or social service consultations, are funded through the initiative.

The enrollment data are for 1997–98. Data for 1998–99 are not available, but the state estimated that enrollment remained the same or decreased slightly.

Missouri (Missouri Preschool Project): The state's prekindergarten initiative is new. Communities have applied for funds, and programs will begin operating in September 1999. Funding is projected to be about $9.2 million for the first year (FY 2000).

New Hampshire (NH Head Start-State Collaboration): State funding is used to supplement all Head Start programs, not to support individual slots.

New Jersey (Early Childhood Program Aid): The state supports prekindergarten as part of an initiative that also provides funding for extending half-day kindergartens to full day. The total amount of funding for the initiative is $303 million. The figure provided in the table is a CDF estimate of how much of this total is used for prekindergarten. It is based on the assumption that about one-quarter of this total was spent on prekindergarten, since about one-quarter of the total number of children served by the initiative are in prekindergarten (the initiative provides funding for 8,197 children in prekindergarten versus 27,262 children attending full-day kindergarten). However, the proportion of funding used for prekindergarten may not necessarily be the same as the proportion of children in kindergarten; while the amount spent per child for prekindergarten and kindergarten is the same within a district, the amount per child differs from district to district, depending on the percentage of the district's children who are low-income.

New Mexico (Child Development Program): The enrollment figure provided here is for 1997–98, when funding was $816,000. Data on the number of children served in 1998–99 are not available.

New York (Experimental Prekindergarten): The enrollment figure provided here is for 1996–97, when funding was at the same level. Data on the number of children served in 1998–99 are not available.

North Carolina (Smart Start): Total state funding for the initiative was $140 million in 1998–99, but since the initiative supports a range of services, including not only prekindergarten but also child care subsidies, quality enhancements, parent education, and health screenings, it cannot be determined how much of the total was spent on prekindergarten. The state is unable to provide enrollment data because funds are not only used to provide program slots for individual children, but also for enhancing overall early childhood services in a community, from which all children in the community may benefit. In addition, children may be served by multiple programs funded by Smart Start.

Oklahoma (Early Childhood Four-Year-Old Program): The 1998–99 state funding total reported here does not include additional funds districts receive based on the number of children in prekindergarten who have special needs, limited English proficiency, etc. The state was unable to provide information about the amount of these additional funds.

Oklahoma (Head Start State-Appropriated Funds): Enrollment through the combined state and federal Head Start components was 11,259 for 1998–99. Data on enrollment supported by the state component alone are not available for 1998–99.

Oregon (Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten): The funding level indicated here includes $11,272,167 in continuation funds and half of the $10 million provided for expansion over the 1997–99 biennium. The total number of children served includes 1,701 children who participated for a full school year and an additional 1,363 children who were able to be served by February 1, 1999 as a result of the expansion funding, but did not necessarily participate for the full year. In 1999–2000, the state expects to maintain the current number of slots (3,064) and serve all of the children for the full school year.

Pennsylvania (Education Aid for Kindergarten for Four-Year-Olds): The state's initiative allows school districts to use the state education aid they receive to serve prekindergarten-age children. The spending figure indicated here is the state's estimate of how much of state education funds districts use for this purpose. However, no state funds are targeted specifically for prekindergarten and the total amount of state education aid a district receives is largely unaffected by prekindergarten enrollment. As a result, a district that chooses to use some of its state education funds to serve prekindergarten-age children would, in effect, be shifting funds that would otherwise be used for elementary and secondary students. Enrollment and funding data are for 1997–98.

Rhode Island (Early Childhood Investment Fund): The state's initiative provided $5.3 million in funds for 1998–99, which communities could use for a range of early childhood-related programs, including prekindergarten. However, no communities used the funds to provide prekindergarten, instead primarily using the funds to extend half-day kindergartens to full day.

Rhode Island (State-Funded Head Start Model): The state funding total includes $359,859 for quality enhancements for federally funded slots. Data provided on the number of children served do not include children who benefit from this investment in quality.

Vermont (Early Education Initiative): Enrollment data are for 1997–98. Data for 1998–99 are not available, but it is estimated that enrollment remained the same or decreased slightly.

Washington (Head Start State Match Program): State funding is used to match federal funding for each of the children enrolled in the initiative, and does not provide funding for additional slots.

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State-Funded Head Start Models

One approach for state prekindergarten initiatives is the state-funded Head Start model. An initiative is defined as a Head Start model if it follows the comprehensive quality requirements of the federal Head Start Performance Standards. Under this model, programs receiving state prekindergarten funds are primarily federal Head Start grantees.

While this model is followed by a number of states, it takes several different forms. A state may target the funds for its Head Start model toward increasing slots, improving quality, providing extended-day programs, and/or some other purpose. A state may have a Head Start model that functions as a distinct initiative, with active state involvement, guidance, and monitoring for programs, or one that basically provides funds to match federal spending without an active role for the state. State-funded Head Start models are found in 18 states (Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Kansas,[23] Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey,[24] New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington, and Wisconsin).

School-Based Models

Some states have prekindergarten models that grew out of the public education system. These initiatives generally fund programs in public school settings that emphasize narrow educational goals over more comprehensive objectives. They distribute funds on a non-competitive, formula basis that is similar to the method used for funding elementary and secondary education.

A number of state initiatives have at least some of the components of this model. Eight state initiatives only allow programs to operate in the public schools (District of Columbia, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, New York [Experimental Prekindergarten], Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Wisconsin). An additional 16 state initiatives direct their funds to the public schools. While these initiatives allow schools to subcontract with community-based programs such as Head Start and child care, schools still operate most of the programs (Arizona, Colorado, Florida [its two initiatives], Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, New Jersey, New York [Universal Prekindergarten], Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia).

Despite resembling one another in certain respects, these initiatives do not uniformly follow all the elements of the school-based approach. For example, although many of them focus on education, New York's Experimental Prekindergarten and Ohio's Public School Preschool have comprehensive quality

requirements that are similar to or the same as those of Head Start. Although some of the school-based initiatives do not encourage, or even permit, participation by agencies other than the public schools, Missouri's Preschool Project, New Jersey's Early Childhood Program Aid, and New York's Universal Prekindergarten require schools to involve community-based programs.

Community-Based Models

Another model that states use is a community-based approach that tries to respond to the broader needs of children and families, including the child care needs of working parents. Initiatives with this approach involve a range of providers, including Head Start and child care. By including child care as a prekindergarten provider, this model makes it easier to offer full-day programs. Many initiatives with this approach also support full-day programs by directly funding them, coordinating with the child care assistance program to cover the costs, and/or establishing requirements that programs offer extended hours to families who need them. It is important to note, however, that while school-based models are less likely to support full-day programs, a number of these initiatives also offer schedules that meet the needs of working parents.

Fourteen state initiatives have adopted a community-based approach (Alabama, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico, Tennessee, Vermont, and Washington). Several of these initiatives—Alabama, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico, and Vermont—do not fund a standard prekindergarten program. Instead, they support a variety of early childhood development and education projects that vary from community to community. Projects are very diverse, and may range from half-day prekindergarten classes, to parent and child kindergarten preparation, to transportation or health care for children in prekindergarten or child care, to supplementary supports for parents of children in existing programs. State funding is generally used in conjunction with other resources to help fill existing gaps in programs. Projects are developed by communities through a collaborative process that includes schools, Head Start, child care, and other programs.

Broad-Based Approaches

North Carolina and California support broad-based approaches to strengthen early childhood programs that do not fit the pattern for typical prekindergarten initiatives. Each state provides funds to local communities to enable them to develop and implement comprehensive plans for expanding and improving supports for children from birth to age five.

The goal of North Carolina's Smart Start initiative is to help prepare prekindergarten-age children for school. This initiative differs substantially from other state prekindergarten initiatives. It allows local communities significant flexibility and permits extensive use of funds for direct child care subsidies. It is important to consider Smart Start in any analysis of state prekindergarten initiatives, given North Carolina's substantial investment in the initiative—$140 million in 1998–99—and Smart Start's emphasis on providing children with the resources and supports they need to enter school ready to learn. However, its distinct approach presents a challenge when trying to compare it with other state initiatives. Therefore, rather than being analyzed in each of the individual sections of this report, it is discussed in depth in the chapter on local planning (Chapter 18).

California's new early childhood initiative also takes a broad-based approach in meeting the needs of young children and families. (This initiative is separate from the state's existing prekindergarten initiative that is mentioned above and analyzed throughout this report.) The California Children and Families Initiative was adopted under a ballot initiative (Proposition 10) approved by voters in the 1998 election. The measure establishes a 50 cent per pack tax on cigarettes which will generate approximately $750 million per year to help local communities strengthen and expand services for children from the prenatal stage to age five. Local collaboratives in California counties will assess what additional supports children and families need. The range of activities that could be funded, depending upon the recommendations of each collaborative, include prekindergarten programs, caregiver salary enhancements, home visits, coordination of health care and child care, and child care quality improvements. Funds could also be used for activities not directly related to early care and education, such as health care for young children, domestic violence intervention, prevention, and treatment, and education on the avoidance of tobacco, drugs, and alcohol during pregnancy. This initiative is still in the very early stages of implementation.

Noteworthy Initiatives

Some states' unique approaches deserve particular mention because they involve special efforts to make prekindergarten broadly available, meet the needs of working families, and/or to ensure that low-income children and their families receive comprehensive supports.

- Georgia's Prekindergarten Program, established in 1993, is available to all four-year-old children whose families want them to participate. In 1998–99, the state provided $217 million through lottery funds, enabling 61,000 children to enroll in prekindergarten programs. Programs are offered in a range of settings, including public schools, child care centers, and Head Start centers.

"Going to preschool really makes a difference. I can see it in my child. My other kids didn't go to preschool, and they were really behind when they went to kindergarten."
—Connecticut parent

- Massachusetts launched its Community Partnerships for Children initiative in 1993. The initiative strives to increase the affordability, accessibility, and quality of early childhood programs. Community partnership councils are responsible for determining how to coordinate the state prekindergarten funds with other community resources to meet the comprehensive needs of children and families. Unlike many other states, Massachusetts targets working families. Recognizing the demands of these families' work schedules, the state requires that at least a third of available slots funded by the initiative be for full-day/full-year care and education.

- Ohio is attempting to ensure that all low-income children have access to high quality prekindergarten, either through the state- and federally funded Head Start program or the state-funded Public School Preschool initiative. Programs funded by either initiative must follow the comprehensive quality requirements of the Head Start Performance Standards. The combination of state and federal resources enables nearly nine out of 10 of the state's three- and four-year-olds living in poverty to participate in prekindergarten programs meeting Head Start standards.

- Connecticut's School Readiness Initiative, which was established in 1997, provides comprehensive prekindergarten programs in low-income districts. It requires each district receiving funds to have a community council responsible for developing plans for implementing the initiative. Programs are expected to meet the needs of working parents by making full-day/full-year education and care available to those families who need it. To ensure an adequate supply of safe early childhood facilities, the state offers loan and bond assistance for facilities improvement and construction. The state also funds professional development and accreditation assistance efforts that enhance the quality of prekindergarten programs.

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- New Jersey's Early Childhood Program Aid was established in 1996 as part of the settlement in a school finance equity lawsuit (*Abbott v. Burke*). Under the program, the state provides low-income school districts with funds to extend part-day kindergartens to full-day for five-year-olds and offer half-day prekindergarten to three- and four-year-olds. The 28 low-income urban districts that brought the lawsuit against the state (referred to as the "Abbott districts") are required to provide prekindergarten for all three- and four-year-olds by September 1999, and the remaining districts eligible to receive state aid under the initiative must provide prekindergarten to four-year-olds by 2001–02.

- New York has had a prekindergarten initiative since 1966 that is limited to school-based programs for at-risk children. The state significantly expanded its investment in prekindergarten when it began the Universal Prekindergarten Program in 1998. In 1998–99, the state provided $67 million for the new initiative, serving approximately 19,000 children in 66 districts. According to legislation establishing the initiative, the state plans to increase funding to $500 million by 2001–02, allowing all children to participate in prekindergarten if their districts choose to offer it.

- Oklahoma greatly expanded its investment in prekindergarten in 1998 after the state legislature eliminated eligibility criteria restricting the initiative to children in poverty, thereby opening up prekindergarten programs to all four year-olds. The state began investing in a Head Start model as well.

2

A Blueprint for Quality Prekindergarten Initiatives

Regardless of the approach a state takes in providing prekindergarten, there are a number of components that are essential to ensure that the state's initiative helps children learn and supports families. These components are necessary if prekindergarten is to be available, of high quality, and accessible for all children and families, and integrated with other early childhood programs.

While this report addresses each of the components separately, they all come together to determine whether children and families will have an opportunity to participate in a prekindergarten program and the type of experience they will have. For example, children's ability to participate in the initiative will not only depend on whether state eligibility policies allow them to qualify for prekindergarten. It will also depend on whether the state provides sufficient funding to serve all eligible children and whether the state has addressed the practical barriers that may interfere with their participation. An eligible child is unlikely to participate if the state's funding level enables programs in the child's community to serve only one out of 10 eligible children. A child is also unlikely to participate if she does not speak English and the program has no staff to communicate with her or her parents in their home language. In these and numerous other ways, the various individual elements of prekindergarten initiatives interact to determine the availability, quality, and accessibility of prekindergarten programs and their integration with other early childhood programs.

Ensuring the Availability of Prekindergarten

State initiatives ensure that prekindergarten programs are available to all children and families when:

- Sufficient funds are allocated to support at least two years of high quality, comprehensive prekindergarten for every preschool-age child who needs it.
- Funding is available to as many communities as possible, with priority given to low-income communities.
- A range of providers (such as child care, Head Start, and public schools) is allowed to receive state prekindergarten funds.
- Funding is provided to support an adequate supply of safe facilities that are tailored to young children's needs.

Ensuring High Quality Prekindergarten

High quality prekindergarten programs ensure that:

- All children are cared for in environments that protect their health and safety, and have experiences that help them develop to their full potential.
- Children receive the attention they need in classes with small group sizes and a limited number of children per staff.
- Children learn from highly qualified teachers who are knowledgeable about the development of young children and who are adequately compensated.
- Children and families with unmet nutritional, health care, and social services needs are provided with supports that are at least as comprehensive as those provided by Head Start. Programs may meet these needs either by working with families directly or linking them to other resources and programs in the community.
- Parents have extensive opportunities to be involved in their children's prekindergarten experience and to participate in parent education and support activities.
- Technical assistance, targeted financial assistance for quality, and regular programmatic monitoring are provided.
- Periodic evaluations are conducted to improve programs and demonstrate results.

Ensuring the Accessibility of Prekindergarten

Prekindergarten programs are accessible when:

- The needs of working families are met. This involves providing full-day/full-year programs, preferably with the child staying at the same site for the entire day so as to minimize disruption. It also involves providing parent education and other parent-focused activities outside of working hours.
- Transportation is available free of charge to families who are unable to provide their own.
- Staff are available to communicate with children whose primary language is other than English and all staff are trained to work with these children and their families.
- Children with disabilities and other special needs have the opportunity to participate in prekindergarten and to receive any necessary supplemental supports through coordination with other programs.
- The core program is offered free of charge. Any fees charged for extended hours are minimal and are waived for very low-income families.

Integrating with Other Early Childhood Programs

Prekindergarten initiatives can effectively coordinate with, and build on, existing early childhood programs in the state and in each community when:

- Local communities have the opportunities and incentives to coordinate their prekindergarten resources with other early childhood programs.
- Community planning efforts are supported through technical and financial assistance.
- State agencies collaborate throughout all stages of developing and implementing the initiative to make efficient use of limited resources.

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States may take several different approaches in weaving all of these components into a strong prekindergarten initiative. No single model represents the "right" strategy. Most of the states have addressed, to at least some degree, a number of the components essential to a comprehensive, quality prekindergarten initiative.

PART II

The Availability of Prekindergarten

Given the substantial benefits that prekindergarten can offer young children and their families, it is essential that programs be widely available—to all children and families, in all communities, and in a range of settings. Whether programs are truly available is dependent on state policies regarding levels of funding, distribution of funds, types of agencies allowed to operate programs, financing of facilities, and eligibility criteria.

First and foremost, the overall level of funding available for prekindergarten dictates whether children and families have the opportunity to participate. Only one state, Georgia, currently invests sufficient resources to make prekindergarten universally available.

Also central to families' ability to find prekindergarten in their communities is the method used by the state to distribute funds. Whatever mechanism is used, it must ensure that programs are available in all communities, particularly low-income areas, and that funds are distributed to programs that are able to provide children with a high quality experience. It is also important that the types of agencies that can receive funds reflect the range of providers that families would like to use. Allowing a diverse array of agencies to receive funding increases the likelihood that families will be able to find a program that suits their needs.

Whether communities are able to make prekindergarten available also depends on state investments in adequate facilities. It is unreasonable to expect local programs to finance facilities on their own, especially since environments specifically designed for young children can be costly. Without funding for facilities to house programs, some communities may find it impossible to offer prekindergarten, much less provide it in an appropriate space.

Another major determinant of whether prekindergarten is open to families are state eligibility policies. Most states focus their prekindergarten resources on children at risk, using a variety of factors to limit the availability of prekindergarten. Of course, who actually participates is dependent not only on eligibility criteria, but is also directly linked to state funding: a family may qualify for prekindergarten, but will only be served if funding is available.

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This section focuses on the different approaches states have taken to adopt the first part of the blueprint: ensuring that prekindergarten is available. Chapters in this section include:

- State Funding for Prekindergarten
- Methods for Distributing Prekindergarten Funds
- Types of Agencies Operating Programs
- Financing for Quality Facilities
- Eligibility Criteria for Prekindergarten

3

State Funding for Prekindergarten

The amount a state invests in its prekindergarten initiative has a major impact on all aspects of the initiative. State funding helps determine the number of children who can participate and the number of communities that can receive funds. It influences the level of quality that programs can offer and the capacity of programs to provide supplemental supports to special populations, such as children with developmental delays or those who do not speak English. The funding level also affects the ability of communities to use the prekindergarten initiative as a catalyst for integrating multiple early childhood programs and resources.

State spending on prekindergarten should be analyzed not only by considering each state's total funding, but also by per capita funding, and funding per pupil served by the initiative. Any local funding that supplements state investments should be taken into account as well since, for a number of initiatives, these local supplements are substantial.

Total State Spending

In 1998–99, states invested a total of nearly $1.7 billion in prekindergarten initiatives—approximately two-and-one-half times as much as in 1991–92.[25] Individual states varied widely in the amount they spent on prekindergarten (see Table 2 for a comparison of spending on prekindergarten initiatives in 1998–99 with spending in 1991–92).

- Texas makes the largest contribution ($235 million).[26]
- Georgia, which funds a universal prekindergarten program, has the second highest spending level—$217 million.

Table 2. State Prekindergarten Initiatives: Current State Funding Compared to 1991–92 Funding

State	Program	State Spending 1991–92	State Spending 1998–99	Percent Change in Spending
Alabama	Preschool Collaboration Project	—	$690,000	New
Alaska	Alaska Head Start Program* (State-Funded Head Start Model)	$5,728,174	$5,489,951	-4%
Arizona	Early Childhood State Block Grant* (Prekindergarten Component)	$1,500,000	$10,013,423	568%
Arkansas	Arkansas Better Chance	$5,000,000	$10,000,000	100%
California	State Preschool Program*	$83,335,000	$127,000,000	52%
Colorado	Colorado Preschool Program*	$3,204,000	$21,640,000	575%
Connecticut	School Readiness and Child Care Initiative	—	$39,000,000	New
	State-Funded Head Start Model	$400,000	$5,100,000	1175%
	Total	$400,000	$44,100,000	
Delaware	Early Childhood Assistance Program (State-Funded Head Start Model)	—	$3,600,000	New
District of Columbia	Public School Preschool Program	$11,483,850	$14,591,000	27%
	District-Funded Head Start Model	$1,556,241	$2,570,000	65%
	Total	$13,040,091	$17,161,000	
Florida	Prekindergarten Early Intervention Program	$69,000,000	$97,000,328	41%
	State Migrant Prekindergarten Program	$3,064,540	$3,295,172	8%
	State-Funded Head Start Model	$6,000,000	—	Discontinued
	Total	$78,064,540	$100,295,500	
Georgia	Prekindergarten Program for Four-Year-Olds	—	$217,000,000	New
Hawaii	Preschool Open Doors	n/a	$2,700,000	n/a
	State-Funded Head Start Model	$529,700	$387,387	-27%
	Total	n/a	$3,087,387	
Illinois	Early Childhood Block Grant*	$71,500,000	$136,000,000	90%
	(Prekindergarten Component)			
	State-Funded Head Start Model	$500,000	—	Discontinued
	Total	$72,000,000	$136,000,000	
Iowa	Comprehensive Child Development Program* ("Shared Visions")	$4,958,315	$7,633,087	54%
Kansas	Four-Year-Old At-Risk Children Preschool Program	—	$3,000,000	New
	State-Funded Head Start Model*	—	$2,500,000	New
	Total	—	$5,500,000	
Kentucky	Kentucky Preschool Program	$30,595,270	$39,700,000	30%
Louisiana	Preschool Block Grant*	$3,501,500	$6,650,000	90%
Maine	Two-Year Kindergarten*	n/a	$1,300,000	n/a
	State-Funded Head Start Model	$2,407,393	$2,329,000	-3%
	Early Childhood Demonstration Grants	$150,000	—	Discontinued
	Total	n/a	$3,629,000	
Maryland	Extended Elementary Education Program (EEEP)	$8,948,914	$19,263,000	115%
Massachusetts	Community Partnerships for Children*	$7,500,000	$78,500,000	947%
	State-Funded Head Start Model	$6,000,000	$6,900,000	15%
	Total	$13,500,000	$85,400,000	
Michigan	Michigan School Readiness Program*	$32,917,700	$67,083,000	104%
Minnesota	Learning Readiness	—	$10,300,000	New
	State-Funded Head Start Model	$6,500,000	$18,750,000	188%
	Total	$6,500,000	$29,050,000	
Missouri	Missouri Preschool Project*	—	—	New
Nebraska	Early Childhood Projects	—	$500,000	New
New Hampshire	NH Head Start - State Collaboration (State-Funded Head Start Model)	$201,000	$230,000	14%
New Jersey	Early Childhood Program Aid*	—	$70,000,000	New
	(Prekindergarten Component)			
	State Equalization Aid for Four-Year-Old Kindergarten	$9,500,000	—	Discontinued
	Urban PreK Pilot Program/Good Starts	$2,500,000	—	Discontinued
	State-Funded Head Start Model	$1,300,000	$1,400,000	8%
	Total	$13,300,000	$71,400,000	

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Table 2. State Prekindergarten Initiatives: Current State Funding Compared to 1991–92 Funding *(continued)*

State	Program		State Spending 1991–92	State Spending 1998–99	Percent Change in Spending
New Mexico	Child Development Program		$145,106	$1,300,000	796%
	State-Funded Head Start Model		—	$5,000,000	New
		Total	$145,106	$6,300,000	
New York	Universal Prekindergarten		—	$67,000,000	New
	Experimental Prekindergarten*		$47,000,000	$50,200,000	7%
		Total	$47,000,000	$117,200,000	
North Carolina	Smart Start*		—	n/a	New
Ohio	Public School Preschool		$13,386,236	$17,900,000	34%
	State-Funded Head Start Model		$19,878,559	$92,562,977	366%
		Total	$33,264,795	$110,462,977	
Oklahoma	Early Childhood Four Year Old Program*		$2,132,120	$36,500,708	1612%
	Head Start State Appropriated Funds (State-Funded Head Start Model)		—	$3,316,918	New
		Total	$2,132,120	$39,817,626	
Oregon	Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten* (State-Funded Head Start Model)		$8,200,000	$16,272,167	98%
Pennsylvania	Education Aid for Kindergarten for Four-Year-Olds*		n/a	$5,700,000	n/a
Rhode Island	State-Funded Head Start Model		$1,958,558	$1,965,000	0.3%
	Early Childhood Investment Fund*		—	—	New
	Legislative Allocations for Special Projects		$200,000	—	Discontinued
		Total	$2,158,558	$1,965,000	
South Carolina	Early Childhood Program (Half-Day Child Development Program)		$15,163,447	$22,356,688	47%
Tennessee	Tennessee Early Childhood Education Pilot Program		—	$3,100,000	New
Texas	Public School Prekindergarten*		$181,000,000	$235,000,000	30%
Vermont	Early Education Initiative		$1,414,000	$1,315,000	-7%
Virginia	Virginia Preschool Initiative		—	$23,500,000	New
Washington	Early Childhood Education & Assistance Program*		$17,190,000	$28,897,592	68%
	Head Start State Match Program (State-Funded Head Start Model)		$530,763	$470,000	11%
		Total	$17,720,763	$29,367,592	
West Virginia	Public School Early Childhood Education		$1,035,006	$6,232,702	502%
Wisconsin	Four-Year-Old Kindergarten		$5,800,000	$19,800,000	241%
	State-Funded Head Start Model		$2,250,000	$4,950,000	120%
		Total	$8,050,000	$24,750,000	
TOTAL STATE SPENDING			$697,065,392	$1,675,455,100	140%

General Notes: 1991–92 data are from the Children's Defense Fund's 1994 report, *First Steps, Promising Futures: State Prekindergarten Initiatives in the Early 1990s*, unless otherwise noted. Data on current spending were collected through interviews with state administrators by CDF in 1998 and 1999. Data are provided as they were reported by the state. Some figures may be rounded or estimated. If a state was unable to provide data for the 1998–99 school year, the data year is indicated in the individual initiative's footnote. See footnotes of initiatives marked by * for further explanation.

n/a: Not available (see footnotes for individual initiatives for further explanation)

Alaska (Alaska Head Start Program): The state's spending total for 1991–92 differs from the total provided in CDF's 1994 report because the amount indicated here includes $135,974 for facilities.

Arizona (Early Childhood State Block Grant): The state's spending total for 1991–92 differs from the total provided in CDF's 1994 report because the amount indicated here is an estimate of state funding only. It does not include an additional $500,000 donated by a private benefactor (25 percent of the total funding amount of approximately $2,000,000).

The 1998–99 data provided here are only for the prekindergarten component of the block grant, not the entire block grant. In 1991–92, before it was incorporated into the block grant, the prekindergarten initiative was referred to as the At-Risk Preschool Projects.

California (State Preschool Program): The most current data available on state spending are for 1997–98.

Colorado (Colorado Preschool Program): The state's spending total for 1991–92 differs from the total provided in CDF's 1994 report because the amount indicated here is an estimate for state funding only. Total spending for the initiative in that year was approximately $8,900,000, but local funding was estimated to account for about 64 percent of this total ($5,696,000).

In 1998–99, the initiative also supported 500 full-day kindergarten slots. The state 1998–99 funding

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Table 2. State Prekindergarten Initiatives: Current State Funding Compared to 1991–92 Funding *(continued)*

total provided in the chart is the state's estimate of the amount of total state funding for the initiative spent on prekindergarten.

Illinois (Early Childhood Block Grant): State funding for 1998–99 was calculated by CDF using estimates provided by the state. In 1998, the state combined its prekindergarten initiative with two other initiatives into a block grant with an overall funding level of $154.6 million, an increase of 15 percent over the total funding for the three programs in 1997–98. The figure for state spending provided here is based on the state's assessment that spending on the prekindergarten component increased by at least 10 percent over the 1997–98 funding provided for prekindergarten ($123.4 million) when it was a separate initiative.

In 1991–92, the prekindergarten initiative was referred to as Pre-K for Children At Risk of Academic failure.

Iowa (Comprehensive Child Development Program): In 1991–92, the prekindergarten initiative was referred to as the At-Risk Child Development Program.

Kansas (State-Funded Head Start Model): State funds for Head Start were appropriated for 1998–99, but have not yet been distributed.

Louisiana (Preschool Block Grant): In 1991–92, the prekindergarten initiative was referred to as the High-Risk Four-Year-Olds program.

Maine (Two-Year Kindergarten): The most current data are for the 1997–98 school year. Data for 1998–99 are not available, but it is likely that funding increased since three or four additional schools were offering programs.

Massachusetts (Community Partnerships for Children): The 1991–92 spending figure is for the Chapter 188 initiative, which was incorporated into the current initiative.

Michigan (Michigan School Readiness Program): The state spending figure for 1998–99 does not include funding for evaluation and administration. (Information is not available about whether the 1991–92 data included this funding.)

The earlier CDF report referred to the state's prekindergarten initiative as the Prekindergarten Program.

Missouri (Missouri Preschool Project): The state's prekindergarten initiative is new. Communities have applied for funds, and programs will begin operating in September 1999. Funding is projected to be about $9.2 million for the first year (1999–2000).

New Jersey (Early Childhood Program Aid): The initiative supports prekindergarten as well as providing funding for extending half-day kindergartens to full day. In 1998–99, the total amount of funding for the initiative was $303 million. The figure reported in the table is a CDF estimate of how much of this total is used for prekindergarten. It is based on the assumption that about one-quarter of this total was spent on prekindergarten, since about one-quarter of the total number of children served by the initiative are in prekindergarten (the initiative provides funding for 8,197 children in prekindergarten versus 27,262 children attending full-day kindergarten). However, the proportion of funding used for prekindergarten may not necessarily be the same as the proportion of children in kindergarten; while the amount spent per child for prekindergarten and kindergarten is the same within a district, the amount per child differs from district to district, depending on the percentage of the district's children who are low-income.

New York (Experimental Prekindergarten): The state's spending total for 1991–92 differs from the total provided in CDF's 1994 report because the amount indicated here is an estimate for state funding only. State spending for 1991–92 was calculated from the total spending level of $52,170,000, which included a 10 percent local match.

North Carolina (Smart Start): Total state funding for the initiative in 1998–99 was $140 million, but since the initiative supports a range of services, including not only prekindergarten but also child care subsidies, quality enhancements, parent education, and health screenings, it cannot be determined how much of the total was spent on prekindergarten.

Oklahoma (Early Childhood Four-Year-Old Program): The 1998–99 state funding total reported here does not include additional funds districts receive based on the number of children in prekindergarten who have special needs, limited English proficiency, etc. The state was unable to provide information about the amount of these additional funds.

Oregon (Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten): The 1998–99 funding level indicated here includes $11,272,167 in continuation funds and half of the $10 million provided for expansion over the 1997–99 biennium.

Pennsylvania (Education Aid for Kindergarten for Four-Year-Olds): The state's initiative allows school districts to use the state education aid they receive to serve prekindergarten-age children. The spending figure indicated here is the state's estimate of how much of state education funds districts use for this purpose. However, no state funds are targeted specifically for prekindergarten and the total amount of state education aid a district receives is largely unaffected by prekindergarten enrollment. As a result, a district that chooses to use some of its state education funds to serve prekindergarten-age children would, in effect, be shifting funds that would otherwise be used for elementary and secondary students. The most recent funding data available are for 1997–98.

Rhode Island (Early Childhood Investment Fund): The state's initiative provided $5.3 million in funds for 1998–99, which communities could use for a range of early childhood-related programs, including prekindergarten. However, no communities used the funds to provide prekindergarten, instead primarily using the funds to extend half-day kindergartens to full day.

Texas (Public School Prekindergarten): The state's 1991–92 funding level reported here differs from the amount originally reported by CDF in 1994 because the state has since provided revised funding data.

Washington (Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program): The state's spending total for 1991–92 differs from the total provided in CDF's 1994 report because the amount indicated here is an estimate for state funding only. In 1991–92, the state also used approximately $1.55 million in federal funds from the Child Care and Development Block Grant and about $160,000 from the federal At-Risk Child Care Program for its prekindergarten initiative, for total spending of an estimated $18,900,000 (the amount provided in the 1994 report).

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- In addition to Texas and Georgia, five other states (California, Florida, Illinois, New York, and Ohio) spend over $100 million on prekindergarten.

Forty-two states invest in one or more prekindergarten initiatives. The ten highest spending states account for over three-quarters of state spending on prekindergarten initiatives.

- Alabama, which invests $690,000 in prekindergarten, Nebraska, which provides $500,000 in state funds for a pilot program, and New Hampshire, which spends $230,000 on its state-funded Head Start model, make the smallest total investments.
- Nine states do not invest in prekindergarten (Idaho, Indiana, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming).

While the nationwide total for state spending on prekindergarten initiatives is substantial, a significant amount of the spending is concentrated in a limited number of states.

- The five highest spending states (California, Georgia, Illinois, New York, and Texas) account for approximately half of the total state spending on prekindergarten initiatives.
- Even though they account for just over one-half of the prekindergarten-age population in the United States, the 10 highest spending states (California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, and Texas) account for over *three-quarters* of state spending on prekindergarten initiatives.

State Spending Per Capita

While analyzing total spending on prekindergarten in each state helps to reveal the wide variation in the scope of their initiatives, a fairer way to assess investment levels is on the basis of funding per preschool-age child in the state, or on a per capita basis (see Figure 1). This measure allows for comparison of prekindergarten investments among states of differing sizes.

- The District of Columbia, which requires at least one prekindergarten class in each school, and Georgia, which makes prekindergarten universally available, spend the most on their prekindergarten initiatives per resident preschool-age child.

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- Other states with high levels of spending per preschool-age child are Connecticut, Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Ohio, and Oklahoma.
- Alabama, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania,[27] and Tennessee have the lowest levels of spending per preschool-age child.

Figure 1. State Per Capita Investments in Prekindergarten, 1998–1999

State Spending Per Pupil Enrolled in the Initiative

Another way to analyze state spending is to consider the amount each state spends per pupil actually enrolled in the initiative.[28] Only with a sufficient amount of funding per child participating in the initiative can programs offer a high level of quality. The average cost per child in the federal Head Start program—$5,147 in FY 1998—offers a benchmark for the cost of providing a comprehensive, quality part-day program. This level of funding should allow programs to hire well-trained staff, maintain safe facilities, purchase materials and equipment, and invest in other important resources. However, the amount of state funding per pupil falls far below the Head Start benchmark for most initiatives. The only initiatives that provide this much per pupil in state funds for a part-day program are Tennessee's initiative and some state-funded Head Start models.[29]

State funding per pupil is an imperfect measure for evaluating or comparing the adequacy of state support for quality prekindergarten. There are wide variations in what states intend their prekindergarten funds to cover, depending on how the initiative is structured and whether there are separate funding streams available to cover certain necessary expenses. State initiatives may or may not cover transportation and facilities expenses. They may provide a full-day or part-day program. They may support a standard set of core services, or, as in Alabama, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico, Vermont, and several states funding Head Start models, be used to supplement or fill in gaps in existing programs.[30]

Despite these limitations, state spending per pupil can provide at least some indication of the quality or scope of an initiative. For example, the highest spending per pupil is in Connecticut, which supports full-day programs for many of the children who participate. Another state with a high level of per pupil spending—Tennessee—offers more comprehensive supports than many other states.

State spending per pupil (calculated by dividing total state spending on the initiative by the total enrollment) varies widely across states:[11]

- Connecticut, which provides full-day programs for the majority of its students, has the highest per pupil spending level at $7,800.
- Tennessee spends over $5,000 per pupil and the District of Columbia, Massachusetts, and Virginia each spend over $4,000 per pupil.
- State spending per pupil ranges from $3,000 to $4,000 for seven state initiatives (Florida [Prekindergarten Early Intervention Program], Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Michigan, New York [Universal Prekindergarten], and Washington).
- State spending per pupil is between $2,000 and $3,000 for 10 state initiatives (Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, New York [Experimental Prekindergarten], Ohio, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin).
- State spending per pupil is below $2,000 for 14 state initiatives (Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida [State Migrant Prekindergarten Program], Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont, and West Virginia).

Local Funding to Supplement State Investments

The reach of prekindergarten initiatives and the level of quality they are able to offer also depend on the degree to which state expenditures are supplemented by local funds. In a number of states, prekindergarten initiatives are supported by a significant amount of local funding, either as a result of state requirements that localities provide funds, state efforts to encourage local funding, or the recognition by individual localities that they cannot meet the needs of their children without contributing their own funds.

Ideally, all local programs would be able to combine state prekindergarten funds with local, federal, and private funding to maximize their resources. Yet,

many communities do not have access to local funding. These communities should not be placed at a disadvantage in their efforts to provide quality prekindergarten programs because their state does not provide adequate core funding.

Five states indicated that they require a local match:

- Arkansas requires that programs provide a 40 percent local match, either in cash or through in-kind contributions. This local match requirement generated an additional $4 million worth of resources for prekindergarten in 1998–99.
- Nebraska requires that programs provide half or more of the funds for their projects through a combination of local or federal sources. The total amount of resources other than state funds was over $750,000 in 1997–98.
- New York's Experimental Prekindergarten Program requires a minimum local match of 11 percent. Local programs' contributions totaled $32 million in 1996–97, greatly exceeding the minimum required amount of $6 million.
- Virginia requires a local match, which varies by locality according to a composite index of ability to pay (taking into account factors such as income level, tax rate, and businesses). In 1998–99, the total local funding was $12.4 million.
- Wisconsin requires local districts to provide the same match required for all elementary and secondary education funding. A total of approximately $10 million in local funds was provided for the state's Four-Year-Old Kindergartens in 1998–99.

In several other states, local contributions are not required but still constitute a sizeable portion of the funding for prekindergarten programs. For example:

- Kentucky's local districts are not required to contribute their own funds, but to meet the requirement to serve all eligible children (four-year-olds eligible for free lunch and three- and four-year-old children with disabilities and other special needs) local districts often find that they must supplement state funds with their own resources. It is estimated that local districts contributed about $11.5 million for the initiative in 1997–98.
- Local funds for Maryland's initiative totaled $4 million in 1997–98.[32]
- An evaluation of Massachusetts' initiative conducted over a four-year period (1993–96) found that for every state dollar invested, an additional 45 cents of in-kind contributions was provided by community programs and organizations.[33]

Methods for Distributing Prekindergarten Funds

The manner in which a state distributes funds helps determine where children are served—in which communities and, within those communities, which programs. Regardless of the specific form it takes, an effective funding system is one that:

- Allows funding to be made available to as many communities as possible so that children have access to prekindergarten no matter where they live. Short of reaching this goal, communities with the largest populations of children at risk for school failure are given priority for funding.
- Helps ensure that the programs funded by the state are of the highest quality.
- Offers programs a reliable source of funding from year to year, provided they continue to meet the expectations for quality prekindergarten.
- Provides enough flexibility for programs to respond to increases in the size of the prekindergarten-eligible population and the number of families who want their children to participate and to keep pace with the rising costs associated with maintaining a high level of quality.
- Enables a diverse array of providers—including public schools, Head Start, and child care—to participate so that communities can take advantage of their existing early childhood resources.
- Ensures that any local match requirement for state funds is reasonable so that communities with limited resources are able to offer prekindergarten.

In trying to accomplish these goals, states have used several methods for distributing funds. Most states use one of the following approaches:

- ***A non-competitive approach*** where the state predetermines, through legislation or regulation, which communities or programs will be allowed to receive funds. This approach is used by 27 state initiatives.
- ***A competitive approach*** where the state requires programs or communities to submit applications for funding, and then evaluates the proposals to determine which of the programs or communities will be awarded grants. This approach is used by 25 initiatives.
- ***A combined approach*** where a portion of state funds is distributed through a non-competitive approach and a portion through a competitive approach. This approach is used by four initiatives.

In some states, the funding method is a multi-stage process, with states making the initial distribution of funds to local communities, and then communities distributing funds to individual programs. The funding approach—non-competitive, competitive, or combined—may be the same at each stage of the process, or may differ from stage to stage. The following discussion focuses primarily on the initial distribution of funds by the state, whether it be to local communities, school districts, or individual programs.

Balancing Competing Goals

Any of the three funding approaches can accomplish the goals discussed above, provided the initiative is carefully designed. For example, funds can be made available across a wide range of communities either through a non-competitive approach that is designed to allocate funding to every community in the state or through a competitive approach that offers all communities in the state the opportunity to apply for funds.

States can also achieve an effective funding system by combining competitive and non-competitive approaches in ways that enable them to take advantage of the best aspects of each. For example, a state may distribute a certain amount of its funds on a non-competitive basis across all school districts to ensure that every community receives at least some funds, and then distribute the remaining funds on a competitive basis to agencies outside the public schools. This method offers a broad array of providers the opportunity to participate, if a sufficient proportion of funds are reserved for agencies other than the schools.

In some cases, components of an ideal funding system will appear to conflict with one another. For example, renewing grants to the same programs each year provides programs with a stable funding base, but it also deprives communities without programs of access to funds if overall funding for the

initiative does not increase. While a competitive process that gives preference to the highest quality programs helps ensure that children have the prekindergarten experiences they need, it may also mean that communities without strong providers are unable to receive funding, even if they have many children who could greatly benefit from prekindergarten programs.

Many of these conflicts can be resolved if states provide sufficient financial and technical resources. By increasing the amount of funding to meet the rising need for prekindergarten, states can renew funding for existing grantees so that they have stable funding from year to year, while making new funding available to communities that have yet to receive grants. By offering technical assistance and other supports to help communities develop their early childhood programs, states can facilitate the participation of communities that need more quality prekindergarten programs but lack the capacity to offer them.

Non-Competitive Funding

States with non-competitive funding predetermine which districts or programs are eligible for funds and the amount, or a formula for calculating the amount, of funding each eligible district or program will receive. The level of funding is generally based on the number of children participating, or expected to participate, in combination with other factors. Many states provide a per pupil allotment, which may be the same or may vary across districts or programs. In some cases the funding formula for prekindergarten resembles the funding formula for elementary and secondary education, with lower-income districts receiving more state funding per pupil than higher-income districts (see box below for further discussion on the interaction between prekindergarten funding and elementary and secondary education funding). States that adopt a non-competitive approach may either provide open-ended funding, where the amount of funding will depend on enrollment rather than an established ceiling, or capped funding, where there is a limit on how much each district or program can receive.

A non-competitive funding approach is used to distribute state prekindergarten funds for 27 initiatives—including 20 initiatives that provide the funds to school districts (Arizona, District of Columbia, Florida [for both of its initiatives], Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York [for both of its initiatives], Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin) and seven state Head Start models that distribute the funds to Head Start programs (Alaska, District of Columbia, Maine, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, and Washington).

Efforts to Equalize Funding for Elementary and Secondary Education Affect the Distribution of Prekindergarten Funds

States are grappling with how to distribute state education funds for elementary and secondary schools to ensure that educational resources are distributed both adequately and equitably across all districts. They often try to design a funding approach that offsets differences in access to local resources between lower and higher income communities as well as one that takes into account differences among communities in their students' needs. For example, a community with a high percentage of at-risk students may need to provide additional social services or other resources for students and may therefore have higher per pupil costs than other communities.

Many state prekindergarten initiatives are affected by efforts to equalize state education aid in one or both of two ways. One way is if a state distributes prekindergarten funds among districts using a funding formula that closely resembles or matches the state funding formula for distributing state funds for elementary and secondary education. In cases where the state funding formula for elementary and secondary education is designed or changed to provide more funds to lower income districts, state funding for prekindergarten will follow a similar pattern.

A second way in which efforts to equalize school aid may be connected to a state's prekindergarten initiative is when the initiative itself is developed as part of a broader school reform effort designed to address school funding inequities. In such instances, the funding stream for the prekindergarten initiative—rather than simply how the funds are distributed within the initiative—serves to offset inequities among districts. For example, Kentucky established its initiative as part of the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990. The act was passed in response to the Kentucky Supreme Court's ruling that the state's school system was unconstitutional because it failed to provide all children with an equal opportunity to receive an adequate education. The comprehensive plan for overhauling the school system emphasized school accountability and assessment of student progress, increased overall education funding, reformed the funding system to correct the financial disparity between wealthier and poorer school districts, changed governance structures, as well as established a new prekindergarten initiative focused on children at risk of school failure. Similarly, New Jersey established its initiative, which is aimed at low-income districts, as part of a settlement in a lawsuit that challenged the disparities in school spending among districts.

Open-Ended or Capped Funding

Five of the state initiatives using a non-competitive approach have open-ended funding (Kentucky, Maine, Oklahoma, West Virginia, and Wisconsin). These states provide additional funds to cover the costs (or a portion of the costs) of each additional child a district serves, regardless of the total number served. This can offer communities the flexibility to expand their programs to meet the demand for prekindergarten. However, open-ended funding does not necessarily ensure that there will be sufficient resources available in all communities to serve all children. States with open-ended funding often cover only a limited portion of the costs of prekindergarten, leaving it up to the local community to make up the difference. For example, Wisconsin requires the same local match for its prekindergarten initiative as for all of its education programs—the state provides about two-thirds of education funding and local communities provide the remaining one-third. As a result, even with open-ended state funding, a community may be reluctant to make programs available to all children, or to offer it at all, unless it is required to do so.

Other state prekindergarten initiatives using a non-competitive approach set a limit on the amount of funding each community or program is eligible to receive for prekindergarten. This includes 21 initiatives—the 14 initiatives in Arizona, Florida (which uses this approach for both of its initiatives), Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York (which uses this approach for both of its initiatives), Pennsylvania; Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia and the seven state Head-Start models in Alaska, District of Columbia, Maine, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, and Washington. The funding limit is generally established using a formula that takes into account indicators of the relative need for prekindergarten programs among communities, such as the total student population and the number of children eligible for free lunch. For example:

- Arizona allocates funds to each district based on the number of pupils in kindergarten through grade three who are eligible for free lunch.
- New Jersey determines the amount each district receives based on the total number of pupils in each district and the percentage of students with a family income at or below 130 percent of poverty. The formula used to calculate each district's allocation is designed so that each district eligible to receive the funds is able to provide prekindergarten and full-day kindergarten for all of its children.

- South Carolina calculates each district's allocation based on the number of students scoring "not ready" as determined on the most recent first grade readiness test or its equivalent.
- Virginia provides each district with funds to serve 60 percent of eligible children in the district who are not served by Title I or Head Start.

A third variation of non-competitive funding is used by the District of Columbia, which distributes funds so that every school can have at least one prekindergarten class. The amount of funds each school receives is determined by the number of children enrolled and the number of classes it is able to offer. Space constraints and other resource issues limit schools from providing enough classes to serve all preschool-age children.

Requiring Plans from Eligible Districts

Some states that distribute funds to local districts on a non-competitive basis require that the districts submit a plan to the state describing how they will use their funds. The amount of funding for which each district is eligible is predetermined, but to receive its funding, each district must first have its plan approved by the state. Minnesota's Learning Readiness, New York's Universal Prekindergarten, and Virginia's Preschool Initiative use this approach. It resembles the competitive process in that districts must develop proposals detailing how they will provide prekindergarten. While communities' proposals are not judged against *one another* as in a competitive process, they are evaluated to ensure that each community has a solid strategy for meeting the prekindergarten needs of its children and families.

Subcontracting in States with Non-Competitive Funding

In some states that use a non-competitive process to distribute funds to local programs or communities, recipients of direct funding from the state can subcontract their funds using a competitive process. For New York's Universal Prekindergarten, each school district develops its own competitive process to select subcontracting agencies. This enables districts to meet the state requirement that a minimum of 10 percent of their prekindergarten funds be targeted to agencies outside the public schools.

Competitive Funding

Under a competitive approach, states have programs or communities submit applications for funding, and then evaluate the proposals to determine which of the programs or communities will be awarded grants. Competitive grants are used for 25 prekindergarten initiatives—initiatives in 16 states (Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Ohio, Tennessee, Vermont, and Washington) as well as state-funded Head Start models in nine states (Connecticut, Delaware,[34] Hawaii, Kansas,[35] New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, and Wisconsin).

Applications for competitive funding are judged on a variety of components, such as the number of children in the community who have risk factors, the need for additional prekindergarten programs in the community, and the quality of the program applying (or the programs within the community applying). States will generally try to cover as broad a geographic area as possible, while seeing to it that funds are targeted toward the communities most in need of programs.

Most states with competitive funding allow programs that are awarded grants to continue receiving funds from year to year without reapplying, provided they meet program guidelines. When additional funds are made available, competition may be open to programs not yet receiving funds. However, several states, such as Arkansas, Colorado, and Vermont, noted that additional funding has not been available. As a result, there has been no opportunity to open their initiatives beyond the original grantees.

Combined Non-Competitive and Competitive Funding

Four state initiatives blend non-competitive and competitive funding approaches, distributing a portion of the funds through a non-competitive process and a portion through a competitive process.

- Connecticut's School Readiness Initiative provides non-competitive grants to 14 districts designated as "priority districts," while allowing an additional 50 towns identified as having "severe needs" (those where 40 percent or more of the children in the attendance area are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch) to compete for grants of $100,000 each. This mixed approach allows the state to ensure that the communities with the greatest

need for prekindergarten are able to participate, while opening up the program to additional communities.

- Massachusetts uses a combination of allocation methods for its state-funded Head Start model, distributing funds for a teacher salary supplement to all Head Start grantees on a formula basis and providing expansion funds through competitive grants based on need.
- Michigan distributes 81 percent of the funds for its School Readiness Program to schools on a formula basis, and the remaining 19 percent of its funds to agencies other than the public schools through competitive grants. This enables the state to achieve at least some diversity in the agencies operating prekindergarten programs. However, because the state reserves only a limited amount of funding for competitive grants to agencies outside the public schools, the vast majority of programs are still located in school settings.
- Minnesota distributes the majority of its state funds for its Head Start model through a non-competitive process, but can set aside up to 11 percent of the funds for competitive grants to support innovative collaborative projects.

Providing Funds Directly to Parents

Two states—Hawaii and Arizona—take a different approach, distributing some or all funds directly to parents. In Hawaii, the state provides all funds directly to parents, who then select the prekindergarten program they want their children to attend. In Arizona, the state initially distributes funds to districts on a non-competitive basis, but then districts are required to allow up to 50 percent of parents to select the prekindergarten program of their choice and fund individual slots in those programs.

While providing funds directly to parents allows them maximum choice, this approach may not offer the stable funding that programs, especially those in low-income communities, need to operate. As a result, it may not provide adequate assurances that children and families will have quality programs available in their communities.

In addition, this approach does not enable the state to guarantee that children and families receive a package of quality early childhood supports. Hawaii allows funds provided through the prekindergarten initiative to be used in any center meeting child care licensing standards—which generally set much lower expectations for quality than strong prekindergarten standards.

Types of Agencies Operating Programs

One major difference among state approaches to prekindergarten lies in the relative openness of their initiatives to a variety of providers. States may either limit funding and program operation to public schools or permit a broader range of providers in the early childhood education arena—such as child care centers and Head Start programs—to participate as well. Most state initiatives allow prekindergarten programs to operate in diverse settings. However, some initiatives use settings outside public schools to a much more limited extent than others, including nine state initiatives that allow programs to operate only in public school settings.

The Advantages of Diverse Settings

State policies that permit and encourage funds to be used for programs in a variety of settings have several benefits:

- An increased pool of providers from which to choose. This allows states to support those programs that have the greatest potential of offering high quality prekindergarten.
- Greater flexibility for communities to meet their overall need for prekindergarten. For example, in some communities, the public schools lack the facilities to house prekindergarten programs. Unless the community can take advantage of other available resources, such as Head Start and child care, they may not be able to offer prekindergarten at all.
- Increased flexibility for communities to offer the *types* of prekindergarten programs that are responsive to the diverse needs of their children and families. For example, many parents working full time need full-day pro-

grams that child care centers are often best prepared to offer. A prekindergarten program in a child care center may also be preferred by a family with a child in prekindergarten and an infant needing child care because this allows it to have both of its children at the same site. Alternatively, a Head Start center may offer some families the best option because it can provide children with access to the comprehensive services and strong parent involvement components that are the hallmark of Head Start.

- Closer collaboration among early childhood programs and resources. The involvement of a variety of early childhood providers ensures that state prekindergarten initiatives complement, not compete with or duplicate, existing programs. In turn, it also encourages broader support for the prekindergarten initiative throughout the community.

- Improved quality in community early childhood programs. By providing the programs with funding to help them make quality improvements and by requiring that child care programs receiving prekindergarten funds adhere to the initiative's quality standards—which are generally higher than child care licensing requirements—prekindergarten initiatives can bolster the programs' quality.

Allowing Diverse Settings

Multiple types of agencies are allowed to operate programs through 48 initiatives. This includes 31 separate state initiatives (Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida [its two initiatives], Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York [Universal Prekindergarten], Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington) and 17 state-funded Head Start models (Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington, and Wisconsin). (See Table 3 indicating the types of agencies allowed to operate programs for each initiative.)

Arkansas and Georgia each use a particularly diverse array of settings. Arkansas provides direct funding to public schools, Head Start centers, non-profit child care centers, home-based sites, educational cooperative sites, and universities, as well as the Arkansas Children's Hospital. Georgia allows participation by public schools, Head Start centers, non-profit child care centers,

Table 3. Agencies Eligible to Receive Funds for Prekindergarten Programs, Directly and/or by Subcontract

State	Initiative	Public Schools	Head Start*	Non-Profit Child Care	For-Profit Child Care	Family Child Care	Private Schools	In-Home Provider	Other
Alabama	Preschool Collaboration Project	D	S	S					*subcontract:* community agencies, Even Start programs, family services centers
Alaska	Alaska Head Start Program (State-Funded Head Start Model)		D						
Arizona	Early Childhood State Block Grant (Prekindergarten Component)	D	S	S	S		S		*direct:* charter schools
Arkansas	Arkansas Better Chance	D	D	D				D	*direct:* educational cooperatives, universities, hospitals
California	State Preschool Program	D	D	D	D		D		
Colorado	Colorado Preschool Program	D	S	S	S	S			*subcontract:* community agencies, public agencies such as community colleges
Connecticut	School Readiness and Child Care Initiative	S	S	S	S		S		*direct:* towns and communities
	State-Funded Head Start Model		D						
Delaware	Early Childhood Assistance Program (State-Funded Head Start Model)	D	D	D	D	S			*subcontract:* community agencies, community colleges
District of Columbia	Public School Preschool Program	D							
	District-Funded Head Start Model*		D						
Florida	Prekindergarten Early Intervention Program	D or S	S	S	S		S		*subcontract:* community agencies
	State Migrant Prekindergarten Program	D or S	S	S	S		S		*subcontract:* community agencies
Georgia	Prekindergarten Program for Four-Year-Olds	D	D	D	D		D		*direct:* hospitals, Department of Family Services, universities, churches, vocational/technical schools, Atlanta Job Corps, YMCAs and YWCAs, military bases
Hawaii	Preschool Open Doors								parents receive funds directly from the state to enroll their children in the licensed public or private child care center or preschool program of their choice
	State-Funded Head Start Model		D						
Illinois	Early Childhood Block Grant (Prekindergarten Component)	D	S	S					
Iowa	Comprehensive Child Development Program "Shared Visions"	D	D or S	D or S					*direct* or *subcontract:* community agencies
Kansas	Four-Year-Old At Risk Children Preschool Program								
	State-Funded Head Start Model		D						
Kentucky	Kentucky Preschool Program	D	S	S	S	S	S		*subcontract:* community agencies
Louisiana	Preschool Block Grant	D							
Maine	Two-Year Kindergarten	D							
	State-Funded Head Start Model		D						
Maryland	Extended Elementary Education Program (EEEP)	D		S			S		*subcontract:* universities
Massachusetts	Community Partnerships for Children	D or S	D or S	D or S	D or S	S			*subcontract:* community agencies
	State-Funded Head Start Model		D						
Michigan	Michigan School Readiness Program	D or S	D or S	D or S			D or S	S	*direct* or *subcontract:* community agencies
Minnesota	Learning Readiness	D	S	S	S	S	S	S	*subcontract:* charter schools
	State-Funded Head Start Model		D						
Missouri	Missouri Preschool Project	D	S	S					*subcontract:* community agencies
Nebraska	Early Childhood Projects	D	S	S					*direct:* multi-county Educational Service Units; *subcontract:* non-profit community agencies
New Hampshire	NH Head Start-State Collaboration (State-Funded Head Start Model)		D						

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Table 3. Agencies Eligible to Receive Funds for Prekindergarten Programs, Directly and/or by Subcontract *(continued)*

State	Initiative	Public Schools	Head Start	Non-Profit Child Care	For-Profit Child Care	Family Child Care	Private Schools	In-Home Provider	Other
New Jersey	Early Childhood Program Aid	D	S	S					
	State-Funded Head Start Model		D	D					
New Mexico	Child Development Program	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	*direct:* community colleges, state universities, community agencies
	State-Funded Head Start Model		D						
New York	Universal Prekindergarten	D	S	S	S	S	S		*subcontract:* prekindergarten special education providers, community agencies
	Experimental Prekindergarten	D							*direct:* Boards of Cooperative Educational Services
Ohio	Public School Preschool	D	S	S					
	State-Funded Head Start Model		D						*direct:* agencies meeting Head Start performance standards
Oklahoma	Early Childhood Four-Year-Old Program	D	S	S	S				
	Head Start State-Appropriated Funds (State-Funded Head Start Model)		D						
Oregon	Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten (State-Funded Head Start Model)		D	D					*direct:* community colleges, state universities, education service districts, community agencies
Pennsylvania	Education Aid for Kindergarten for Four-Year-Olds	D							
Rhode Island	Early Childhood Investment Fund	D	S	S	S		S		
	State-Funded Head Start Model		D						
South Carolina	Early Childhood Program (Half-Day Child Development Program)	D	S						
Tennessee	Tennessee Early Childhood Education Pilot Program	D	D	D					*direct:* higher education institutions
Texas	Public School Prekindergarten	D	S	S	S				
Vermont	Early Education Initiative	D	D	D	D				*direct:* parent-child centers, social service agencies, child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&Rs)
Virginia	Virginia Preschool Initiative	D	S	S	S		S		*direct:* local government entities; *subcontract:* community agencies
Washington	Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program	D	D	D	D	S			*direct:* local governments, tribal organizations, community colleges, universities, community-based organizations
	Head Start State Match Program (State-Funded Head Start Model)		D						
West Virginia	Public School Early Childhood Education	D							
Wisconsin	Four-Year-Old Kindergarten	D							
	State-Funded Head Start Model		D						
TOTALS:	Direct	34	25	9	6	1	3	2	Direct: 13
	Subcontracted	1	19	19	12	7	10	2	Subcontracted: 13
	Direct or Subcontracted	4	3	3	1	0	1	0	Both: 2

D = Agency can receive direct funding from the state to operate programs.

S = Agency can receive funds through a subcontract with another agency, but not directly from the state.

D or S = Agency can receive funds either directly from the state or through a subcontract.

† May be public school, community non-profit agency, or, as of October 1, 1998, for-profit agency.

* **District of Columbia (District-Funded Head Start Model):** Only the public school Head Start grantee receives District funds through this initiative.

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for-profit centers, private schools, hospitals, the Department of Family Services, universities, churches, vocational and technical schools, the Atlanta Job Corps, YMCAs and YWCAs, and military bases.

A state that allows participation by multiple agencies generally adopts one of two strategies. The state either directly funds all of these agencies or provides direct funding only to school districts, and then allows or requires districts to subcontract with other agencies for prekindergarten classes. Agencies other than public schools are able to receive direct funding for 28 initiatives—11 separate state initiatives (Arkansas, California, Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Mexico, Tennessee, Vermont, and Washington) and the 17 state-funded Head Start models. Agencies outside the public schools are only able to receive funding through local subcontracts for 19 state initiatives (Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Florida [its two initiatives], Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York [Universal Prekindergarten], Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia[36]). Connecticut uses a third variation, providing direct funding to community councils, whose membership is appointed by the school superintendent and the mayor. The councils then subcontract with multiple agencies to operate prekindergarten programs.

Settings for State-Funded Head Start Models

Most states investing in Head Start models only allow federal Head Start grantees to receive funds. However, the Head Start grantees may be one of a range of agencies, including public schools, community non-profit agencies, and, as of October 1998, for-profit agencies. The only exception to this is the District of Columbia, whose Head Start model provides funds only to its public school Head Start grantee.[37]

Four state-funded Head Start models allow additional agencies besides federal grantees to receive funds (Delaware, New Jersey, Ohio, and Oregon). Opening up funding in this way encourages agencies beyond the Head Start community to meet Head Start Performance Standards. New Jersey uses a portion of its state Head Start funds specifically to enable community child care programs to meet some of the comprehensive service requirements of Head Start. If a state provides funds for its Head Start model to other than federal Head Start grantees, it is important for the state to take steps to ensure that these agencies fully understand and implement the mission and objectives of Head Start.

Making Extensive Use of Diverse Settings

A number of states take full advantage of the opportunity to offer programs in multiple settings (see Table 4, which lists the proportion of programs operating in settings other than the public schools for each initiative):

- Most programs funded by state Head Start models are operated by agencies other than the public schools.[75]
- The majority of programs operate in settings other than the public schools in Arkansas, Connecticut, New Mexico, and Vermont.
- There is an approximately even distribution between programs operated in public schools and those operating in other settings in Georgia, Iowa, New York (for Universal Prekindergarten), Tennessee, and Washington.
- Over two-thirds of the districts in Kentucky (119 out of 176, or 68 percent) operated their prekindergarten programs in conjunction with another program or agency, usually Head Start, in 1997–98. This includes districts where programs were provided in settings other than the public schools as well as programs that were operated within the schools but that were jointly funded with another program. There were 31 districts (18 percent) that subcontracted the entire program, 35 districts (20 percent) that subcontracted with other agencies to have them serve some children, and 88 districts (50 percent) that jointly operated programs by sharing classroom costs with other agencies.

Requiring Participation by Outside Agencies

Allowing agencies besides public schools to operate programs does not necessarily ensure that outside agencies will be utilized. This is particularly true in states where these agencies can only participate by subcontracting with public schools, since schools may not have sufficient incentive to subcontract. Some states that provide all direct funding to schools have established requirements to ensure that other agencies have sufficient opportunities to participate:

- New York requires that at least 10 percent of Universal Prekindergarten funding in each district be used for programs operated by agencies other than the public schools. Statewide, this minimum percentage is greatly exceeded—35 percent of funds are used to support programs in settings outside the schools. But participation among other agencies is limited by a requirement that schools subcontract only with agencies inside the district boundaries. This prevents districts that lack agencies capable of providing quality prekindergarten from looking beyond their borders.

Table 4. Initiatives Open to Agencies Other than Public Schools: Extent Multiple Agencies Are Used*

State Initiative	Percentage of Children Served or Programs Operated by Public Schools	Percentage of Children Served or Programs Operated by Agencies Other Than Public Schools
Arkansas: Arkansas Better Chance	About one-third of center-based programs operate in schools or educational cooperatives.	About one-third of center-based programs operate in private child care settings, and about one-third in Head Start.
Connecticut: School Readiness and Child Care Initiative	Public schools account for 19 of the 113 sites (17 percent).	Head Start programs account for 30 of the 113 sites (27 percent) and non-profit centers, for-profit centers, and private schools account for 64 out of 113 sites (57 percent).
Florida: Prekindergarten Early Intervention Program	1,166 out of 1,477 programs (79 percent) operate in public schools. [Data from 1996–97]	311 out of 1,477 programs (21 percent) operate in settings other than public schools, including: 55 (4 percent) in Head Start, 120 (8 percent) in non-profit centers, and 136 (9 percent) in private schools. [Data from 1996–97]
Georgia: Prekindergarten Program for Four-Year-Olds	44 percent of the contracts (which can be to operate one or more classes) are with local school systems.	56 percent of the contracts are with private providers, including Head Start, child care agencies, private schools and other agencies.
Hawaii: Preschool Open Doors	None.	All certificates funded by the initiative are used in licensed child care centers (public or private).
Illinois: Early Childhood Block Grant (Prekindergarten Component)	At least 90 percent of programs operate in public schools.	10 percent or fewer of programs are operated by Head Start or non-profit child care agencies.
Iowa: Comprehensive Child Development Program "Shared Visions"	63 out of 144 programs (44 percent) operate in public schools.	81 out of 144 programs (56 percent) operate in settings other than public schools, including: 64 (44 percent) in Head Start and 17 (12 percent) in non-profit centers.
Kentucky: Kentucky Preschool Program	Less than one-third of school districts (57 out of 176, or 32 percent) operate their entire program on their own, without subcontracting with another program or agency.	Over two-thirds of the districts (119 out of 176, or 68 percent) operate their programs in conjunction with another program or agency, usually Head Start, including: 31 districts (18 percent) that subcontract the entire program to another agency, 35 districts (20 percent) that subcontract with other agencies to serve some children, and 88 districts (50 percent) that jointly operate programs by sharing classroom costs.
Maryland: Extended Elementary Education Program (EEEP)	Most programs operate in public schools.	Only a few programs are operated outside the public schools, by non-profit child care centers.
Michigan: Michigan School Readiness Program	Over 80 percent of funding supports programs operating in public schools.	About 20 percent of funding supports programs operating outside the public schools, including: 15 percent for Head Start, 2 percent for home-based programs (which are operated by social services agencies, schools, or other agencies), and 1–2 percent for community agencies (mental health agencies, etc.).
Minnesota: Learning Readiness	Data not available.	Out of 353 participating school districts: 181 (51 percent) subcontract with Head Start for at least some services, 100 (28 percent) subcontract with child care centers for at least some services, and 143 (41 percent) subcontract with charter schools for some services. (A district may subcontract with more than one agency; a district may also subcontract for some services while directly providing some services itself.)
Nebraska: Early Childhood Projects	Only public schools and multi-county Educational Service Units receive direct funding, but they collaborate with other agencies in operating programs.	For each of the 10 projects, schools are collaborating with one or more other agencies. For example, community service agencies serve as partners for seven projects, Head Start for five, a church for at least one, and a community college for at least one.

continued on the next page

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Table 4. Initiatives Open to Agencies Other than Public Schools: Extent Multiple Agencies Are Used* *(continued)*

State Initiative	Percentage of Children Served or Programs Operated by Public Schools	Percentage of Children Served or Programs Operated by Agencies Other Than Public Schools
New Mexico: Child Development Program	Four out of 21 projects (19 percent) are school-based.	17 out of 21 projects (81 percent) are based outside the schools, including: 14 (67 percent) that are community-based, and 3 (14 percent) that are home-based.
New York: Universal Prekindergarten	About 65 percent of programs operate in public schools.	About 35 percent of programs operate in agencies outside the public schools, including non-profit and for-profit centers, family child care, private schools, and community agencies.
Ohio: Public School Preschool	About 93 out of 115 grants (81 percent) are provided to public schools.	About 22 out of 115 grants (19 percent) are provided to Head Start programs.
Oklahoma: Early Childhood Four Year Old Program	Majority of programs operate in public schools. (Exact data not available.)	Limited number of programs operate outside of public schools (programs may be operated by Head Start and child care centers).
South Carolina: Early Childhood Program (Half-Day Child Development Programs)	All programs operate in public schools.	None.
Tennessee: Tennessee Early Childhood Education Pilot Program	17 out of 30 programs (57 percent) operate in public schools.	13 out of 30 (43 percent) programs operate in settings outside the public schools, including: 8 (27 percent) in Head Start (one of which is administered by a public school), 2 (7 percent) in non-profit child care centers, and 3 (10 percent) by institutions of higher education.
Texas: Public School Prekindergarten	Most programs operate in public schools. (More detailed data not available.)	Estimate not available. (Head Start, non-profit centers, and for-profit centers may operate programs.)
Vermont: Early Education Initiative	23 out of 147 programs (16 percent) operate in public schools.	124 out of 147 programs (84 percent) operate in settings other than public schools, including: 71 (48 percent) in Head Start, 43 (29 percent) in non-profit centers, and 10 (7 percent) in other settings such as parent-child centers, social services agencies, and resource and referral agencies.
Virginia: Virginia Preschool Initiative	58 out of 68 projects (85 percent) are operated by public schools.	10 out of 68 projects (15 percent) are operated by organizations other than public schools, generally Head Start or YMCA.
Washington: Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program	150 out of 271 programs (55 percent) operate in public schools.	121 out of 271 programs (45 percent) operate in settings other than public schools, including: 44 (16 percent) in centers, 2 (1 percent) in family child care, 21 (8 percent) in community-based organizations, 6 (2 percent) in tribal centers, 11 (4 percent) in universities, 15 (6 percent) in churches, and 22 (8 percent) in other settings.

* *Note:* This chart does not include initiatives for which information on the types of agencies operating programs was not available. It also does not include state-funded Head Start models. These primarily provide funding to federal Head Start grantees, which may one of a range of agencies, including public schools, community non-profit agencies, or, as of October 1998, for-profit agencies.

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- Missouri's new initiative will require school districts to use a minimum of 10 percent of their grant award to support and/or provide services to licensed prekindergarten programs in the community for children ages three and four. This may consist of contracting with a program outside the school to provide a prekindergarten class, assisting centers to achieve accreditation, providing ongoing professional development opportunities, helping to implement one of the four research-based curriculum models, providing a professional resource library, or offering other professional development and training activities.
- New Jersey requires its 28 low-income urban districts (the Abbott districts) to show evidence of collaboration with community child care programs in their plans for providing prekindergarten.

Additional Strategies and Incentives

Several states, rather than relying on requirements, have adopted methods that have been successful in *encouraging* the participation of various types of agencies. For example, Georgia, when needing additional slots or programs, gives priority to new applicants. Iowa widely publicizes the availability of funds through mailing lists and a web site.

In some states, the heavy reliance on settings other than public schools is due to the fact that the outside agencies have resources the public schools lack. Washington noted that communities must rely on different kinds of providers to meet the needs of their children and families, including family support activities and full-day care and education. The high percentage of programs in New York operating outside public school settings may be partially explained by the fact that many schools lacking the facilities to house program had to turn elsewhere.

Limiting Settings to Public Schools

A traditional model, where only public schools operate programs, is still used for eight state initiatives (District of Columbia, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, New York [Experimental Prekindergarten], Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Wisconsin) and for the District of Columbia's Head Start model.[39] In addition, a number of initiatives that permit multiple types of agencies to operate programs still have only a limited proportion of programs in settings other than public schools (Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Ohio,[40] South Carolina, and

Texas). For these initiatives, only schools are allowed to receive direct funding, and although they have the option of contracting out for programs, few choose to do so.

By limiting their programs to public schools, either through policy or practice, states may be limiting their vision of prekindergarten to a narrow focus on education, rather than recognizing the importance of offering comprehensive supports, including health care, social services, and full-day/full-year programming, to children and families. Still, while it can be more difficult to provide comprehensive services when programs are only offered in the public schools, there is no reason why public schools cannot do so with the necessary financial and technical support. In Ohio, the Public School Preschool programs are required to meet Head Start standards for comprehensive services.

6

Financing for Quality Facilities

Ensuring the availability of quality prekindergarten programs requires that programs have the funding needed to provide adequate facilities. Programs face high rents and real estate prices, especially in a strong economy. Space that is specifically designed for early childhood programs is particularly costly. Yet, states generally use their prekindergarten funds to support direct operating costs—teacher salaries, materials, and supplies—rather than facilities. Few states fund programs sufficiently or in a manner that ensures they have adequate facilities available. Often, states expect local programs to contribute their own space.

Without receiving additional resources for facilities, most programs cannot afford market rates for real estate, much less the additional expenses involved in either rehabilitating or building a space that meets the physical requirements to support quality programming. Consequently, facilities are often inadequate, poorly located, or simply unavailable. This is a particular problem in low-income communities. States that recognize the necessity of addressing these problems can look to the example of those few states that have made a commitment to supporting facilities development.

Serious Shortages of Quality Facilities

In many states, physical space is unavailable to accommodate growing prekindergarten enrollments. The search for facilities will only become more difficult as states embark on elementary and secondary school reform efforts. These efforts often entail reducing class size, creating a demand for additional classrooms and facilities. As a result, prekindergarten programs operating in

Most states have done little to address the twin dilemma imposed by the lack of facilities funding: poor quality space and inadequate supply.

public schools must compete for space. In New York, for example, many schools were already experiencing a space crunch when the state launched its new prekindergarten initiative. The facilities shortage was particularly acute in some communities that were also trying to expand their full-day kindergarten programs. Due to this lack of space, some districts eligible to receive state prekindergarten funds decided not to participate in the initiative. California, which has traditionally had many of its child care programs located in the public schools, faced a facilities shortage when class size for lower elementary grades was reduced. Child care programs were forced to compete for limited space.

Without sufficient funding to address such shortages, programs that do manage to find space may settle for space that is less than perfect. For example, instead of occupying ground-level facilities with bathrooms adjacent to each classroom and 40 to 50 square feet per child—among a few of the physical characteristics associated with quality space—a program may use space that meets only minimal health and safety standards. Such compromises on quality can jeopardize children's physical well-being and make it more difficult to offer a developmentally appropriate program. The arduous classroom management and physical maintenance associated with poorly planned and equipped facilities are believed to be related to teacher burnout and turnover. These problems can be alleviated by providing support for quality facilities.

State Efforts to Build the Supply of Quality Facilities

Most states have done little to address the twin dilemma imposed by the lack of facilities funding: poor quality space and inadequate supply. However, a few states are making efforts to ensure that an adequate supply of quality facilities is available.

In 1998, Massachusetts experienced such a severe supply problem that, despite a waiting list for the state's prekindergarten initiative, the City of Boston faced the prospect of returning part of its grant; providers lacked the licensed facilities to enroll more children. At the city's suggestion, the state Department of Education approved a plan to use one-third of the city's funding, $1.4 million, to make grants to providers who could immediately use

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funds to expand and improve prekindergarten facilities. In just months, 11 programs used those funds, and $1.9 million more in other grants and loans, to create high quality space for 231 additional children. The program was so successful, despite many logistical problems associated with using annual operating dollars to make long-term capital improvements, that the state offered each of the state's municipalities the option of applying a portion of its grant to make similar investments in the physical capacity of its prekindergarten infrastructure.

Connecticut has developed the most ambitious and well thought-out facilities development program. In June 1998, the state enacted a "pooled revenue bond"[41] program as part of its School Readiness legislation. Non-profit prekindergarten programs are eligible for low-interest loans that only require that the programs repay between 15 and 25 percent of the loan. The programs repay their share of the loan over the 30 year life of the bond through monthly deductions from state payments for providing child care and prekindergarten. The state pays the balance of the loan principal and interest. In this way, the facilities development program converts the provider's share into a manageable monthly operating cost that providers can comfortably afford within the operating subsidies paid by the state for prekindergarten. The first $10 million bond pool sold in October 1998 and has paid for the construction and renovation of six child care facilities serving 1,050 children.[42] A second bond pool is being readied for sale.

With the types of support that Connecticut and Massachusetts provide for new and expanding prekindergarten programs, states can help make prekindergarten available in more communities. They can also ensure that when prekindergarten initiatives are accompanied by broader school reform, the two efforts do not lead to a competition for space, but instead complement each other in helping all children succeed in school.

7

Eligibility Criteria for Prekindergarten

In establishing eligibility criteria for their prekindergarten initiatives, states determine which children are able to participate and the length of time for which they may do so. However, whether children who qualify are actually served depends on whether the state allocates sufficient funds to reach all eligible children.

States may permit all preschool-age children to be eligible for prekindergarten or may limit eligibility to certain groups of children, such as those from low-income families or those meeting other criteria defined by the state. States that open their initiatives to all children generally do not provide funds or establish policies to ensure prekindergarten is actually available to these children. Georgia is the only state that both sets its eligibility criteria and provides the necessary funding to make prekindergarten available to all four-year-olds whose families want them to participate. States that limit eligibility for their initiatives will typically target children at risk. However, even these states are generally unable to serve all eligible children. For example, Tennessee serves just 2 percent of eligible children (children ages three and four who are eligible for free lunch) while Massachusetts' Community Partnerships for Children initiative is estimated to serve less than one-quarter of the eligible children (children with working parents earning less than the state median income).

In setting their eligibility criteria, states also determine what age children can participate. States may limit their initiatives to four-year-olds, so that children have only one year of prekindergarten prior to entering kindergarten, or allow children to participate at younger ages, so that their prekindergarten experience can extend for multiple years. Some prekindergarten initiatives allow participation by a particularly broad age range of children.

This can be advantageous in that it gives programs and communities greater flexibility. Yet, it can also result in too few resources devoted to providing prekindergarten for three- and four-year-olds. Eighteen initiatives allow only four-year-olds to participate; 31 state initiatives allow both three- and four-year-olds to participate; and eight initiatives permit an even broader age range of children to participate.

Determining Which Children Are Eligible

The optimal policy includes eligibility criteria and sufficient funding to make prekindergarten available to all children whose families want them to participate. This makes it possible for states to build broad support that in turn promotes the stability of their programs. It also helps states to avoid segregating children by income, allowing children from different socio-economic backgrounds to be served in the same classroom.

Unfortunately, states generally do not provide enough funds to serve all preschool-age children, much less all low-income children, children with special needs, and other children at risk of school failure. Most states do, however, target their initiatives to children with the greatest need for prekindergarten. They do this in different ways. Some open eligibility to all children but give first priority to those at risk. Others target funds to low-income communities. Still others restrict eligibility to children identified as at risk based on their family income, family background, health or developmental status, or some other criteria that may be uniformly applied across communities or may differ among them.

Opening Eligibility to All Children

Twelve state initiatives have no eligibility restrictions other than age limits (California, District of Columbia, Georgia, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico, New York [Universal Prekindergarten], Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Wisconsin). In these states, there is no strict income cut-off or specific at-risk criteria that children and families have to meet.

However, an unrestricted eligibility policy does not necessarily mean that all prekindergarten-age children are served. This is because it is generally not accompanied by sufficient funding to make prekindergarten available to all children, or by requirements that it be offered to all children. State initiatives that have unrestricted eligibility but do not provide enough funding to serve all children often give priority to those considered to be at greatest risk of

school failure. As a result, several initiatives that, *in policy*, open eligibility to all children, *in fact*, primarily serve low-income children and children with other risk factors.

Georgia is the only state with an initiative that ensures prekindergarten is available to all families who want to participate.

Serving All Children

Georgia is the only state with an initiative that ensures prekindergarten is available to all families who want to participate, as defined by the following criteria:

- Prekindergarten is available to all children, regardless of family income or other characteristics.
- Prekindergarten is available in all communities. (There are a few districts in Georgia where prekindergarten activities are not supported through the state initiative, but this is generally because in these communities the need has already been met by other programs such as Head Start.)
- The state makes sufficient resources available so that all families who want their children to participate in prekindergarten have access to programs.

A few other states with unrestricted eligibility, while not currently ensuring that all children who need prekindergarten can participate, are making or plan to make efforts to reach out to large numbers of children.

- New York has a prekindergarten initiative that, according to the original legislation, will be expanded by 2001–02 to provide each district with sufficient funds for programs to serve all children who wish to participate. However, the state will not require districts to offer prekindergarten programs if they choose not to offer them.
- Oklahoma recently changed its eligibility criteria to open the initiative to all four-year-olds. This led to an enormous expansion in the number of districts offering prekindergarten and the number of children participating. However, there are still many districts that are not able to serve all children who would like to participate or are not offering programs at all.

Most of the remaining states with unrestricted eligibility either cap funds at a level that is insufficient to offer prekindergarten to all families who want it or require that communities cover such a large proportion of the costs of their programs that many opt not to provide prekindergarten or to provide it for only a limited number of children.

Having Open-Ended Eligibility with Priority to Children At Risk

Since most states with open-ended eligibility criteria have more eligible children and families needing and wanting prekindergarten than available slots, they must determine some way of prioritizing children. In many of these states, children are served on a first-come, first-served basis. However, in several states, children with risk factors are given priority, either as the result of state or local policies.

- California gives first priority to children in the child protective services system. In addition, while the state does not have a set income eligibility cutoff, the lowest income children receive high priority.
- In Minnesota, communities use health and developmental screenings to determine which children have the greatest needs, and prioritize children accordingly. All children between the ages of three-and-a-half and four have the opportunity to participate in the screenings.
- Missouri encourages programs to target low-income children and children with special needs by giving extra consideration in the grant evaluation process to those districts that plan to serve large numbers of children meeting these criteria.
- In New Mexico, many individual programs choose to focus on serving at-risk populations, such as children with special needs, homeless children, or bilingual children.
- Starting in 1999–2000, New York's Universal Prekindergarten Initiative will give preference to economically disadvantaged children (defined by the state as children who are eligible for an income-based program such as free and reduced-price lunch or food stamps). These children will continue to receive preference until the initiative is expanded to provide sufficient funding for all four-year-old children. The state has also targeted at-risk children by distributing initial funding to districts with the greatest economic and educational needs.

Opening Eligibility to All Children Within Low-Income Districts

New Jersey's Early Childhood Program Aid is provided only to low-income districts, but all children living in these districts are eligible to participate—and will eventually be guaranteed the opportunity to participate. The state distributes funds to districts in which at least 20 percent of students qualify for the free lunch program. In 1998–99, a total of 136 districts met the crite-

ria for receiving prekindergarten aid. The districts eligible for the funds include the 28 low-income urban districts that were involved in a lawsuit challenging the state's school financing system. As part of the agreement settling the lawsuit, the state is required to make prekindergarten available to all three- and four-year-old children in these 28 districts by September 1999. In the remaining districts that qualify for Early Childhood Program Aid, prekindergarten must be made available to all four-year-olds by 2001–02.

Limiting Participation to Low-Income Children

Low-income children are often at greater risk of school failure yet less likely to have access to prekindergarten programs that could help prepare them for school.[43] Recognizing this, many states use low-income status as the primary criterion in determining who qualifies to participate in prekindergarten. However, states differ in how they define "low income."

- Eligibility for prekindergarten is limited to age-eligible children living in families with incomes at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty line ($13,880 for a family of three in 1999) or those receiving public assistance for almost all of the state-funded Head Start models (Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Ohio,[44] Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington, and Wisconsin). These states are using the same eligibility guidelines as required by the federal Head Start program.

- Eligibility is also restricted to children in poverty by initiatives in Tennessee and Washington.

- Arizona and Kentucky restrict participation to prekindergarten-age children whose family income allows them to qualify for the federal free lunch program (a family income equal to 130 percent of the federal poverty line, or $18,040 for a family of three in 1999).[45]

- Children in families with incomes of up to 185 percent of poverty ($25,680 for a family of three in 1999) are served by Ohio's Public School Preschool and by Texas' Public School Prekindergarten.[46]

- Children who reside in priority districts or attendance areas of severe needs schools and whose family incomes fall below 75 percent of state median income ($42,400 for a family of three in 1999) are served by Connecticut's School Readiness Initiative. (The state also allows up to 40 percent of the children in a program to have family incomes higher than the income cutoff, but these families are required to pay a fee.)

In Ohio, the combination of state and federal resources now enables nearly nine out of ten of the state's three- and four-year olds living in poverty to participate in prekindergarten programs meeting Head Start standards.

- Children in families with incomes up to 75 percent of the state median income ($36,500 for a family of three in 1999) are eligible for Hawaii's Preschool Open Doors program. However, the state ranks applicants by income, giving priority to those with the lowest incomes. As a result, the vast majority of children served have family incomes that are much lower than the income cutoff.

Guaranteeing that Low-Income Children Are Able to Participate

Most of the states that limit their initiatives to low-income children are not able to serve all children who qualify under the income guidelines. However, a few states take steps, or are in the process of taking steps, to ensure that their initiatives are available to all low-income children who meet the state's eligibility criteria:

- Districts in Kentucky are required to provide prekindergarten programs to all four-year-olds eligible for free lunch and all three- and four-year-olds with developmental delays or disabilities, regardless of income.
- Districts in Texas are required to offer a prekindergarten program if they have 15 or more eligible four-year-olds (children are eligible if they either are unable to speak or comprehend English, qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, or are homeless).

Making Progress Toward Covering All Low-Income Children

A few states are making concrete efforts to invest enough state funds so that, when combined with federal funding sources, there will be sufficient resources to provide all low-income children with access to prekindergarten. While they do not *guarantee* access to all eligible children, they are taking positive steps forward to give children with the greatest need for prekindergarten the opportunity to participate. For example:

- Delaware is trying to ensure that all children eligible for Head Start have access to prekindergarten through either the federal Head Start program or the state-funded Head Start model (the Early Childhood Assistance Program).
- Ohio is attempting to allow all children in families with incomes below 185 percent of poverty to have access to prekindergarten through the combined state- and federally supported Head Start program or its Public

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School Preschool Program. The combined state and federal Head Start program currently serves 84 percent of the children meeting Head Start income eligibility guidelines (a family income at or below 100 percent of poverty). When Head Start-eligible children who are enrolled in the Public School Preschool program are also taken into account, the percentage of children in poverty who are attending comprehensive prekindergarten programs supported by state and/or federal funds is 88 percent.

Using Multiple Criteria to Establish At-Risk Status

Rather than applying a simple income test uniformly, some states use eligibility standards with multiple criteria to allow localities greater flexibility to meet children's and families' needs. In these states, low-income status is still considered in determining whether children are allowed to participate, but additional factors are taken into account as well. The state provides a menu of indicators that can be used to identify children who are at risk and then each individual district or program, depending on the needs of its community, is able to select which indicators to emphasize when determining eligibility. Sixteen state initiatives use this approach (Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida [Prekindergarten Early Intervention Program], Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Nebraska, New York [Experimental Prekindergarten], Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont, and Virginia).

A few of these states, while allowing programs some flexibility, still specify that at least a certain proportion of funds be targeted to particular groups:

- At least 75 percent of children served by Florida's Prekindergarten Early Intervention Program must be eligible for free lunch and be in families participating in the welfare-to-work program.
- Seventy percent of the funds for Nebraska's initiative are targeted to serve children who are eligible for Head Start, have a family income below 150 percent of poverty, were premature or at low birth weight, or meet other specified at-risk criteria.
- At least 50 percent of those served by Michigan's initiative must be eligible for free or reduced-price lunch or for child care assistance.

States set parameters on how local programs define and apply the eligibility criteria in other ways as well. For example:

- To be eligible for Iowa's initiative, children must have family incomes below 130 percent of poverty and have at least one additional risk factor. Localities are allowed to determine which secondary risk factors to consider.

- Each child participating in Kansas' initiative must meet three at-risk criteria, which include: being children of teenage parents, single parents, or parents who do not have their high school diploma or GED, living in poverty, not speaking English, receiving a referral from the welfare program or other early childhood programs such as Even Start or Parents as Teachers, and having a developmental or academic delay.

Using Parents' Work Status in Eligibility Criteria

Several state initiatives focus on helping low-income, or low- to moderate-income, working families. The Massachusetts' Community Partnerships for Children is one initiative that takes this approach. To participate, children must have a family income below the state median income ($52,400 for a family of three in 1999) and their parents must be working. (Massachusetts' efforts to ensure that their prekindergarten programs meet the needs of working families are discussed in Chapter 13.)

New Mexico's state-funded Head Start model is directed to families moving from welfare to work. Families are eligible for the prekindergarten initiative if they are participating in the state's welfare program, New Mexico Works. A family participating in the welfare program is still eligible for the state-funded Head Start model even if their earnings exceed the poverty line once they begin working.

Florida's Migrant Prekindergarten Program also determines eligibility based on the work status of the children's parents. The initiative serves children of migrant workers.

Determining How Long Children May Participate

States vary in what age restrictions they set. Some allow children ages three and four to participate, while others allow only four-year-olds to qualify for prekindergarten. Several states permit a relatively broad age range of children—such as from birth to age five—to participate.

Allowing both three- and four-year-olds to participate enables children to attend prekindergarten for two years, rather than disrupting them after only one year. Providing children with a stable arrangement over a longer time period gives them the opportunity to develop closer relationships with their teachers and peers. Research also indicates that extending early interventions

over a long-term period benefits low-income children in particular.[47] A recent study found that Head Start children who participate in the program for two years instead of only one perform better on tasks assessing their vocabulary and prewriting skills.[48] A prekindergarten initiative that permits two years of participation helps parents as well, since it eliminates the need to seek out different arrangements over the two-year period.

Eighteen initiatives allow only four-year-olds to participate; 31 state initiatives allow both three- and four-year-olds to participate; and eight initiatives permit an even broader age range of children to participate.

Extending eligibility criteria beyond three- and four-year-olds to a broader age range also has certain advantages. It allows communities the flexibility to direct resources toward the population most in need, whether it be three- and four-year-olds, infants and toddlers, or school-age children. In addition, these policies can make it possible for children to receive a sustained intervention throughout their early years. However, broad age eligibility standards do not offer sufficient guarantees that at least a portion of the funds will be spent on prekindergarten programs for three- and four-year-olds. For example, when, in 1996, Arizona incorporated its designated funding source for prekindergarten into a block grant funding program for a broader age population, many school districts stopped providing prekindergarten programs and used the funds for other purposes. In Rhode Island, most schools have used their funds to provide full-day kindergarten, and none have chosen to offer prekindergarten for three- and four-year-olds.

Thirty-one initiatives allow two years of participation by opening eligibility to both three- and four-year-olds. This includes 15 state initiatives (Connecticut, Florida [its two initiatives], Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky,[49] Massachusetts, Minnesota,[50] Missouri, New Jersey, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, and Vermont[51]) as well as 16 state-funded Head Start models (Connecticut, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington, and Wisconsin). While these initiatives allow programs to serve three-year-olds, there is significant variation in the degree to which they are actually serving children this age. For example, Florida's Prekindergarten Early Intervention Program serves primarily four-year-olds. Three-year-olds account for only about 6 percent of children served. In comparison, three-year-olds represent a larger proportion of prekindergarten enrollment in Iowa and Connecticut—25 percent and 35 percent, respectively.

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A Picture of Children Served by State Prekindergarten Initiatives

State eligibility policies offer only a partial understanding of who is served by the initiatives; to get a more complete picture of who is actually participating, it is important to look at demographic data on participants in the state initiatives. Unfortunately, many states do not collect or are unable to provide background data on the children served. The state data that are available, however, show that initiatives targeted to children at risk of school failure are indeed serving children with one or more background factors that place them at a serious disadvantage when entering school. For example:

- In Arkansas, 56 percent of the children were from low-income families, 18 percent had parents with low education levels, 15 percent were developmentally delayed, 11 percent had teenage mothers, 6 percent were low weight at birth, 5 percent qualified for IDEA programs for children with disabilities and other special needs, 3 percent were in families with substance abuse or neglect problems, and 2 percent qualified for English as a second language (percentages do not add up to 100 percent because children may have fallen into more than one category).

- Georgia's prekindergarten initiative, which is universally available, serves a large number of children at risk of school failure. About half of the children enrolled are considered "at-risk," defined by their participation in Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), free and reduced-price meals, or food stamp programs.

- In Hawaii, nearly nine out of 10 children participating in the Preschool Open Doors Project were living in families with incomes at or below 50 percent of poverty.

- In Michigan, 68 percent of children were from low-income families, 41 percent were children of single parents, 29 percent were living in rural or segregated areas, 25 percent had a family history of low school achievement or dropout, 24 percent had unemployed parents, 20 percent were children of teenage parents, 15 percent had developmental delays, and 11 percent had long-term or chronic illnesses (percentages do not add up to 100 percent because children may have fallen into more than one category).

- In Vermont, 60 percent of the enrolled children had a developmental delay, 58 percent were economically disadvantaged (defined as having a family income below 200 percent of poverty), 32 percent had experienced abuse or neglect, 1 percent had limited English proficiency (this includes not only children for whom English is a second language, but also children who are having language problems for other reasons), and 22 percent had other risk factors such as living in unsafe housing or neighborhoods (percentages do not add up to 100 percent because children may have fallen into more than one category).

Eighteen state initiatives prevent children from participating for more than one year by limiting eligibility to four-year-olds (or children who are only one year from entering kindergarten). This includes California, Colorado, Delaware, District of Columbia, Georgia, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, New York (its two initiatives),[52] Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia, Washington,[53] and Wisconsin.

Several states have initiatives that serve a broad age group. In some of these states, funding may be used to provide prekindergarten classes as well as a range of supports for children and families, such as home visiting for infants and toddlers, full-day kindergarten, or after-school care for school-age children.

- Funds can be used to serve children ages birth to five (or age of kindergarten entry) in Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, and West Virginia.
- Arizona's prekindergarten initiative was incorporated into an Early Childhood Block Grant in 1996. The block grant funds may be used for prekindergarten programs, full-day kindergarten, and supplements for grades K–3. The prekindergarten program component itself had remained limited to four-year-olds through 1997–98, but in FY 1999, that age limit was eliminated.
- Rhode Island's Early Childhood Investment Fund can be used to serve children from birth to age 10. (No districts are using the funds yet to provide prekindergarten programs; instead, many are providing full-day kindergarten.)

PART III

Promoting Quality in State Prekindergarten Initiatives

The quality of children's early childhood education is inextricably linked to their future capacity for learning and development. A good quality program keeps children safe from harm, stimulates their confidence and curiosity, and provides them with experiences that help them learn skills needed to succeed in school and in life—from learning words, to paying attention, to playing or working with other children, to holding a pair of scissors, to knowing their colors.

A high quality program also strives to address the various problems that many children, particularly low-income children, face that can interfere with learning, from inadequate food and nutrition, health care, and housing, to other family stresses. Programs can address these problems by providing health, mental health, nutrition, and social services to children and families, either directly or through linkages with other community resources. Parent involvement and education opportunities are another important factor in providing a quality early education experience that benefits children and their families.

To help ensure that children receive a prekindergarten experience that promotes their learning as well as their overall well-being, states can establish

standards that articulate the components of a high quality program. States can also help local programs to offer a high quality experience by providing financial and technical support and regularly monitoring programs.

* * *

This section focuses on the varied approaches states have taken regarding the second section of the blueprint: ensuring high-quality prekindergarten. Chapters include:

- Promoting Quality Through Standards
- Ensuring the Basic Components of a Quality Classroom Experience
- Supporting Comprehensive Nutrition, Health, and Social Services
- Encouraging Parent Involvement, Education, and Support
- Supporting Quality through Technical Assistance, Financial Support, and Monitoring

8

Promoting Quality Through Standards

It is important that state prekindergarten initiatives incorporate a specific set of quality standards.[34] Quality standards can best ensure that programs provide children with high quality prekindergarten experiences if they are:

- Comprehensive in scope. Comprehensive standards cover the full range of the components essential to a quality program. They address elements affecting the basic classroom environment, such as child/teacher ratios, as well as children's broader needs, such as health care and nutrition.
- Commonly applied across all agencies receiving funds. Common standards are advantageous for those administering the program as well as for children and families served by the program. The state can more easily monitor programs because they are all expected to meet the same standards. Families served by prekindergarten programs are also assured of greater consistency across programs.

While the majority of states have a set of standards in place that they apply commonly across prekindergarten programs, there is much room for improvement. Too many states have standards that do not even address all of the essential components necessary for a high quality program (see box below for a description of these components). A number of states address the components to a certain extent, but do not have strong enough requirements in each area to ensure that children receive the most beneficial early childhood experience.

This chapter examines the overall structure and scope of each state's standards. The individual components of the standards—including basic classroom quality components such as class size and child/staff ratios, teacher credentials and training, and curriculum, as well as comprehensive service components such as nutrition, health care, and social services, and components concerning parent involvement, education, and support—are discussed in the following chapters.

What is High Quality Early Childhood Education?

High quality early childhood education programs meet children's needs for security, affection, stimulation, and development. Programs are only able to meet these needs if they include at least the following components, all of which should be addressed by strong quality standards:

- A nurturing, highly qualified, well-compensated, and stable staff with time to interact and develop close relationships with the children.
- A classroom with small group sizes and low child/staff ratios that ensure children have the attention they need.
- Good health, nutrition, and safety practices, appropriate for prekindergarten-age children.
- A physical environment that is safe and appropriate for prekindergarten-age children.
- A curriculum that is suited to the child's developmental stage and each child's individual interests and needs, and that is culturally and linguistically appropriate.
- Inclusive policies that promote the participation of children, families, and teachers from diverse backgrounds where possible.
- A holistic approach that, in addition to educational goals, addresses (either directly or by linking with other programs) other critical needs—such as proper health care, good nutrition, and adequate housing—that must be met for children to develop properly.
- Policies and practices that encourage parents to be equal partners in their child's education and development. Staff work closely with parents to involve them in their child's learning, maximize their participation, and support them in their role as parents. When appropriate, efforts are also made to help strengthen parents in other ways, such as helping them become self-sufficient and improve their literacy.

State Prekindergarten Quality Standards

State prekindergarten standards vary enormously in the degree to which they address the components necessary to ensure a high quality early education experience. They may be based on early childhood standards such as Head Start Performance Standards and/or accreditation guidelines, which can provide exemplary models for high quality programs, or on child care licensing standards and/or school codes, which often do not address more than basic health and safety concerns.

Head Start Performance Standards clearly lay out how programs can provide quality prekindergarten experiences that meet the comprehensive needs of children and families. They indicate what is needed to ensure a safe, nurturing environment that supports children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. They require programs to assess children's nutritional, health care, mental health care, and social services needs, and provide or make referrals for any necessary follow-up and treatment. The standards also require programs to make active efforts to build partnerships with parents, including efforts to involve parents in the program's decision-making process and provide them with broader supports.

Accreditation guidelines also outline the criteria for a high quality program that promotes children's healthy growth and development. These criteria include warm, close relationships between staff and children, two-way communication between staff and parents, well-qualified staff, a curriculum that furthers children's learning, and a safe physical environment. The most frequently used accreditation criteria are those developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), although other national organizations and some states have also developed their own criteria.

On the other hand, child care licensing requirements primarily focus on protecting the basic health and safety of children, and often fail to adequately address other important areas. They are, on average, less likely than Head Start standards or accreditation criteria to require the components that experts consider necessary for comprehensive, quality programs. For example, 31 states' child care licensing standards do not require teachers in centers to have any early childhood training before serving children.[35] In 33 states, child care licensing requirements for child/staff ratios for four-year-olds in centers do not meet recommended levels.[36]

"I think the program is excellent. My son has been a lot better with his numbers and colors, he has also been more attentive since he started the program."
—Colorado parent

School codes, like child care standards, do not offer comprehensive quality assurances. These codes, which generally are not designed with young children in mind, typically cover the preparation and licensing of teachers, the instructional program, instructional materials and equipment, and additional supports such as libraries and guidance counselors.[37] In most cases, school codes will not have requirements specific to prekindergarten-age children, such as appropriate student/teacher ratios. School codes are also unlikely to address the entire range of supports that children need, including nutrition, health care, and social services.

While it is important that state prekindergarten standards be much more comprehensive than the standards encompassed in child care licensing or school codes, it is also still necessary that the prekindergarten standards be coordinated closely with these other standards. Programs funded by the prekindergarten initiative that are operating in public schools, child care, or Head Start must meet any standards governing these settings in addition to the prekindergarten standards. Coordination of standards is critical so that local prekindergarten programs clearly understand what requirements must be met and so that differences among standards do not prevent certain types of agencies from offering prekindergarten. Such coordination need not entail lowering expectations for quality, but rather giving incentives, support, and encouragement for all programs to raise their quality to a higher level.

Head Start Performance Standards and Accreditation Ensure Quality

Recognizing that Head Start Performance Standards and accreditation criteria developed by early childhood experts offer models for high quality prekindergarten experiences, many states have used one or both of these frameworks in designing their prekindergarten standards. In addition, some states' standards, rather than simply being based on accreditation *criteria*, include a requirement for programs to go through an accreditation *process*. This process is an effective program improvement tool offering an opportunity for teachers and families to evaluate their programs in relation to standards that represent a consensus among early childhood experts for what constitutes a high quality program. The program can then identify areas needing improvement and make necessary changes.

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- Head Start Performance Standards are followed by all state-funded Head Start models (Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey,[35] New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington, and Wisconsin).
- Head Start Performance Standards are also used by Ohio for its Public School Preschool programs.
- Standards for New York's Experimental Prekindergarten and Washington's Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program were developed using Head Start Performance Standards as a model.
- NAEYC standards provided the model for Illinois' prekindergarten requirements.
- In Colorado and Kentucky, prekindergarten standards are based on both Head Start and NAEYC standards.
- Prekindergarten standards that require programs to have or work towards accreditation are used in Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, and Missouri.

Minimal Standards Fail to Provide Adequate Quality Assurance

Eleven state prekindergarten initiatives have much more limited requirements, often consisting primarily of child care licensing requirements and/or school codes, with perhaps only a few additional requirements. In some states, these standards require certain settings to comply with regulations that they would not have to otherwise meet—for example, by necessitating that public schools hosting prekindergarten programs meet child care licensing standards. Still, as discussed above, using child care licensing standards or school codes does not provide adequate assurances that children will receive a quality prekindergarten experience.

The following states generally require programs to meet only child care licensing requirements or school codes:

- Programs in Hawaii and New Mexico must only meet child care licensing standards.
- Alabama does not have prekindergarten standards for its initiative. Many of the state's programs collaborate with other programs, such as Head Start and Title I, and are subject to their requirements. However, there are no common standards that programs must follow.

Eleven state initiatives have minimal quality requirements, often requiring programs to meet only child care licensing requirements or school codes, neither of which offer sufficient assurance that children will receive a high quality experience.

- Maine's Two-Year Kindergarten programs are only required to meet child care licensing standards and school codes.
- New Jersey's Early Childhood Program Aid (ECPA) initiative does not have a common set of prekindergarten standards for all of its programs. The state has some requirements that apply to programs in its 28 Abbott districts, but these requirements do not apply to programs in other districts receiving funds. For the most part, programs in these districts are only required to follow the standards governing their particular auspices—for example, programs in public schools are required to follow school codes and child care centers are required to follow child care licensing standards. Not only does this approach fail to offer adequate quality assurances, but with different programs following different standards, there is no basic level of consistency across programs.
- Texas only requires programs (including those offered in settings other than public schools) to meet school codes. If a school subcontracts with a private agency, the agency must also meet child care licensing standards.
- There are no requirements specific to prekindergarten programs in the District of Columbia, Kansas, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. However, since the programs in these five states all operate in public schools, they would be subject to any applicable school codes.

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Ensuring the Basic Components of a Quality Classroom Experience

Some of the components that are inextricably linked to the quality of a child's classroom experience are child/staff ratios, class size, teacher qualifications, and curriculum. The majority of state initiatives have requirements to ensure that children are in classes with low child/staff ratios, small group sizes, well-qualified teachers, and developmentally appropriate curricula. However, a number of initiatives fail to provide adequate quality assurances in one or more of these important areas.

Small Classes and Low Child/Staff Ratios

One of the primary determinants of the quality of a prekindergarten program is the relationship between a child and his or her teachers. It may be difficult for children to form a close relationship if the class is too large or if their teacher is responsible for too many children. Large class sizes or high child/staff ratios may also limit children's opportunities for the one-on-one communication with their teachers that is essential to develop language and reading skills. Therefore, it is important that state prekindergarten standards encompass requirements for relatively small class sizes and low child-to-staff ratios. Early childhood experts recommend that the maximum number of children, age four, allowed per group or class be between 16 and 20, and that the maximum number of children, age four, per adult be eight to 10.[59] Most states' requirements fall within these guidelines, but there are some exceptions. (See Table 5 for prekindergarten class size and ratio requirements in comparison to state child care licensing requirements.)

Table 5. Maximum Class Size and Child/Staff Ratio Requirements In State Prekindergarten Initiatives and State Child Care Licensing Regulations

State	Name of Initiative	Maximum Number of Children Age Four Allowed Per Group or Class		Maximum Number of Children Age Four Allowed Per Teacher/Adult	
		State Prekindergarten (1998)	Child Care Licensing (1998)	State Prekindergarten (1998)	Child Care Licensing (1998)
Alabama	Preschool Collaboration Project	NR	20	NR	20
Alaska	Alaska Head Start Program (State-Funded Head Start Model)	20	NR	10	10
Arizona	Early Childhood State Block Grant (Prekindergarten Component)	NR	NR	15	15
Arkansas	Arkansas Better Chance	20	NR	10	15
California	State Preschool Program	NR	NR	8	12
Colorado	Colorado Preschool Program	15	24	8	12
Connecticut	School Readiness and Child Care Initiative	20	20	10	10
	State-Funded Head Start Model	20	20	10	10
Delaware	Early Childhood Assistance Program* (State-Funded Head Start Model)	20	NR	10	15
District of Columbia	Public School Preschool Program	NR	20	NR	10
	District-Funded Head Start Model	20	20	10	10
Florida	Prekindergarten Early Intervention Program*	NR	NR	10	20
	State Migrant Prekindergarten Program	NR	NR	10	20
Georgia	Prekindergarten Program for Four-Year-Olds	20	36	10	18
Hawaii	Preschool Open Doors	NR	NR	16	16
	State-Funded Head Start Model	20	NR	10	16
Illinois	Early Childhood Block Grant (Prekindergarten Component)	20	20	10	10
Iowa	Comprehensive Child Development Program "Shared Visions"	16	NR	8	12
Kansas	Four-Year-Old At-Risk Children Preschool Program	NR	24	NR	12
	State-Funded Head Start Model	20	24	10	12
Kentucky	Kentucky Preschool Program	20	28	10	14
Louisiana	Preschool Block Grant*	NR	NR	NR	14
Maine	Two-Year Kindergarten*	NR	30	NR	10
	State-Funded Head Start Model	20	30	10	10
Maryland	Extended Elementary Education Program (EEEP)	20	20	10	10
Massachusetts	Community Partnerships for Children*	20	20	10	10
	State-Funded Head Start Model	20	20	10	10
Michigan	Michigan School Readiness Program	18	NR	8	12
Minnesota	Learning Readiness	20	20	10	10
	State-Funded Head Start Model	20	20	10	10
Missouri	Missouri Preschool Project	20	NR	10	10
Nebraska	Early Childhood Projects	20	NR	10	12
New Hampshire	NH Head Start-State Collaboration (State-Funded Head Start Model)	20	24	10	12
New Jersey	Early Childhood Program Aid*	15	20	15:2	12
	State-Funded Head Start Model*	20	20	10	12
New Mexico	Child Development Program	NR	NR	12	12
	State-Funded Head Start Model	20	NR	10	12
New York	Universal Prekindergarten*	20	16	18:2	8
	Experimental Prekindergarten*	20	16	18:2	8
Ohio	Public School Preschool	20	28	10	14
	State-Funded Head Start Model	20	28	10	14

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Table 5. Maximum Class Size and Child/Staff Ratio Requirements In State Prekindergarten Initiatives and State Child Care Licensing Regulations (*continued*)

State	Name of Initiative	Maximum Number of Children Age Four Allowed Per Group or Class		Maximum Number of Children Age Four Allowed Per Teacher/Adult	
		State Prekindergarten (1998)	Child Care Licensing (1998)	State Prekindergarten (1998)	Child Care Licensing (1998)
Oklahoma	Early Childhood Four-Year-Old Program	20	30	10	15
	Head Start State-Appropriated Funds (State-Funded Head Start Model)	20	30	10	15
Oregon	Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten (State-Funded Head Start Model)	20	20	10	10
Pennsylvania	Education Aid for Kindergarten for Four-Year-Olds	NR	20	NR	10
Rhode Island	Early Childhood Investment Fund*	NR	20	NR	10
	State-Funded Head Start Model	20	20	10	10
South Carolina	Early Childhood Program (Half-Day Child Development Program)	20	NR	10	18
Tennessee	Tennessee Early Childhood Education Pilot Program	20	20	10	15
Texas	Public School Prekindergarten*	NR	35	NR	20
Vermont	Early Education Initiative	18	20	10	10
Virginia	Virginia Preschool Initiative	16	NR	8	12
Washington	Early Childhood Education & Assistance Program*	18	20	6	10
	Head Start State Match Program (State-Funded Head Start Model)	20	20	10	10
West Virginia	Public School Early Childhood Education*	NR	NR	NR	12
Wisconsin	Four-Year-Old Kindergarten*	NR	24	NR	13
	State-Funded Head Start Model	20	24	10	13
Total Number of State Prekindergarten Initiatives Meeting Recommended Levels		41		44	
Recommended Levels*		***16–20***		***8–10***	

Note: NR = Not regulated by the state. See footnotes of initiatives marked by * for further explanation.

Delaware (Early Childhood Assistance Program): The state allows up to 20 children per prekindergarten class, but recommends a class size of 17.

Florida (Prekindergarten Early Intervention Program): The state does not have maximum class size requirements for its prekindergarten programs, but it recommends that programs have no more than 20 children per class.

Louisiana (Preschool Block Grant): The state does not have maximum class size requirements for its prekindergarten programs, but it recommends that programs have no more than 20 children per class.

Maine (Two-Year Kindergarten): The state does not have maximum class size or child/staff ratio requirements for its prekindergarten programs, but it recommends that programs have no more than 10 children per adult.

Massachusetts (Community Partnerships for Children): The prekindergarten ratio and class size requirements indicated in the table (no more than 10 children per adult, with a maximum class size of 20) are for programs in child care centers. Programs in other settings are subject to requirements for lower ratios and smaller class sizes. The highest ratio allowed is 9:1 if programs are in Head Start, 15:2 if programs are in public schools, and 6:1 if programs are in family child care. The maximum class size allowed is 18 if programs are in Head Start, 15 if programs are in public schools, and 6 if programs are in family child care.

New Jersey (Early Childhood Program Aid): The prekindergarten ratio and class size requirements indicated in the table (no more than 15 children for every two adults, with a maximum class size of 15) apply to schools in Abbott districts. For prekindergarten classes operated by child care programs in Abbott districts, there must be three adults for every 20 children, with a maximum class size of 20. For prekindergarten classes in other districts, there may be up to 25 children per adult, with a maximum class size of 25.

New Jersey (State-Funded Head Start Model): The prekindergarten ratio and class size requirements indicated in the table (no more than 10 children per adult, with a maximum class size of 20) apply to only programs operated by Head Start agencies. The state's Head Start model also funds programs in child care centers, which are only required to meet child care licensing requirements (no more than 12 children per adult, with a maximum class size of 20).

New York (Universal Prekindergarten): For a prekindergarten class size of up to 18, there must be one teacher and one paraprofessional, and for a prekindergarten class size of 19 or 20, there must be one teacher and two paraprofessionals. The maximum class size allowed is 20.

New York (Experimental Prekindergarten): For a prekindergarten class size of up to 18, there must be one teacher and one paraprofessional, and for a prekindergarten class size of 19 or 20, there must be one teacher and two paraprofessionals. The maximum class size allowed is 20.

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Table 5. Maximum Class Size and Child/Staff Ratio Requirements in State Prekindergarten Initiatives and State Child Care Licensing Regulations *(continued)*

Rhode Island (Early Childhood Investment Fund): The state does not have ratio or class size requirements for its prekindergarten programs, but it recommends that programs have no more than 10 children per adult and class sizes of no more than 20.

Texas (Public School Prekindergarten): The State Board of Education no longer has the authority to regulate ratios or class sizes for prekindergarten programs. Previously, the state allowed no more than 18 children per adult, and class sizes of no more than 22.

Washington (ECEAP): Prekindergarten programs operated by schools may have class sizes of up to 24 children, but they still must maintain the 6:1 ratio required of programs in other settings.

West Virginia (Public School Early Childhood Education): Regulation of child/staff ratios and maximum class sizes for prekindergarten programs is determined at the local level.

Wisconsin (Four-Year-Old Kindergarten): The state does not have ratio or class size requirements for its prekindergarten programs, but it recommends that programs have one teacher and additional adults, with a class size of under 20 children.

Recommended levels for ratios and class size: The levels indicated here are based on the recommendations included in accreditation guidelines developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and in the National Health and Safety Performance Standards developed by the American Public Health Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

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Class Size Requirements

The majority of state initiatives have maximum class size requirements that follow the recommendations of early childhood experts for no more than 20 students per class. Yet, 16 state initiatives fail to set any class size requirements.

- Forty-one state initiatives meet the recommended levels for class sizes—23 separate state initiatives (Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey,[60] New York [its two initiatives], Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington[61]) as well as the 18 state-funded Head Start models. Most of these initiatives allow classes to have up to 20 students, but no more. Colorado allows prekindergarten classes of only 15 students or fewer.
- There are no class size requirements for 16 state initiatives, including Alabama, Arizona, California, District of Columbia, Florida (its two initiatives), Hawaii,[62] Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, New Mexico,[63] Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Many of these states have most or all of their programs operating in public schools.
- Four of the states without requirements—Florida, Louisiana, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin—recommend, but do not require, a maximum class size of 20.

Child/Staff Ratio Requirements

The majority of state prekindergarten initiatives require that there be at least one adult for every 10 children, which is consistent with recommended levels. Under such a requirement, programs will generally have a class of 20 children with one lead teacher and one teaching assistant. However, 10 initiatives have no child/staff ratio requirements.

- Forty-four state initiatives have ratio requirements that meet recommended levels. This includes 26 separate state initiatives (Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida [both of its initiatives], Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey,[64] New York [both of its initiatives], Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington) as well as all of the state initiatives providing funds for Head Start models. Washington ensures that children have the greatest opportunities for one-on-one attention by requiring state-funded prekindergarten programs to have no more than six children per adult.

There are no class size requirements for 16 state initiatives. Ten state initiatives have no child/staff ratio requirements.

- Programs funded by Arizona's Early Childhood Block Grant, Hawaii's Preschool Open Doors Project, and New Mexico's Child Development Program must each follow the child/staff ratio requirements set by its state's child care licensing standards. However, these ratio requirements fail to meet recommended levels—one adult is allowed to be responsible for up to 12 four-year-olds in New Mexico, 15 four-year-olds in Arizona, and 16 four-year-olds in Hawaii.

- Ten state initiatives have no ratio requirements (Alabama, District of Columbia, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, West Virginia, and Wisconsin). As with class size requirements, the states without ratio requirements are generally those that have all or most of their programs operating in public schools. At one time, Texas did set a maximum for child/staff ratios allowed in its prekindergarten classes, but the state has since eliminated this requirement.

Prekindergarten Standards Differ From Child Care Regulations

Twenty-five states have an initiative (or initiatives) that require smaller class sizes and/or lower child/staff ratios than are required by child care licensing standards. This means that child care centers receiving prekindergarten funds must follow higher standards. As a result, prekindergarten initiatives offer an incentive for child care centers to bolster their quality. States that have initiatives with class size and/or ratio requirements that are stronger than those of child care licensing standards include Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii (for its state-funded Head Start model), Iowa, Kansas (for its Head Start model), Kentucky, Maine (for its Head Start model), Michigan, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey (for programs in Abbott districts and for its Head Start model), New Mexico (for its Head Start model), Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin (for its Head Start model).

Teacher Credentialing and Training

In addition to class size and child/staff ratios, positive outcomes for children are also linked to the qualifications and training of teaching staff. Research shows that the quality of education and care provided is affected by the

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amount of specialized training a teacher receives and the number of years of education a teacher has completed:

Better trained staff are more likely to create warm, caring environments that are responsive to the needs of children and help prepare them to succeed in school.

- Trained and educated staff contribute to improved cognitive and other developmental outcomes. Better trained staff are more likely to create warm, caring environments that are responsive to the needs of children and help prepare them to succeed in school. Studies have shown that college degrees, in particular, make a difference in the quality of teaching.[65]
- Evidence also suggests that trained and educated providers are more communicative with parents and are more responsive to their needs.[66]

Most states with prekindergarten initiatives appear to recognize the importance of educational preparation and set some minimum requirements for formal training and/or work experience for lead teachers in prekindergarten programs. Most states also require that teachers receive ongoing training once they begin teaching. However, the content of the requirements for teacher credentialing and training varies greatly among states. States also differ in the extent to which they provide financial assistance to enable teachers to attain necessary credentials and fulfill training requirements.

Teacher Credentials

It is essential that state prekindergarten initiatives establish teacher credentialing requirements so that teachers have the education necessary to teach young children. However, states' policies on teacher credentials vary widely. Thirteen initiatives require teacher certification with a background in early education, 37 initiatives require credentials other than certification, and four initiatives have no requirements at all.

In addressing teacher training and education, it is important that states not only establish requirements but also design policies that help teachers meet the requirements. Otherwise, certain requirements, such as teacher certification, may have unintended effects on the ability of Head Start programs and child care centers to participate in the initiative because their teachers may lack such credentials. They may also make program expansion difficult given the current shortage of teachers with early childhood certification. States can remedy this by providing program staff with some flexibility as well as offering

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additional assistance and incentives to enable them to meet credentials. For example, New Jersey's Early Childhood Program Aid and New York's Universal Prekindergarten initiative allow teachers time to earn their credentials. Both of these states also assist teachers by providing funds for professional development. Oklahoma offers an alternate certification that enables teachers who have not completed a formal degree program to qualify with a combination of coursework and experience.

Teacher Certification Requirements

Requiring that teachers in the prekindergarten program have certification in early childhood education or elementary education with some coursework in early childhood education is the strongest policy that states can adopt. Although their particular certification criteria differ, 13 initiatives have this requirement (District of Columbia, Florida [State Migrant Prekindergarten Program], Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Missouri, New Jersey,[67] New York [its two initiatives], Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Wisconsin).[68] At least two of these states, Maine and New Jersey, are updating their certificates or establishing new ones.

Several states that require teacher certification allow some exceptions to provide greater flexibility. For example:

- Louisiana allows non-certified teachers to teach in the program if a shortage of certified teachers would prevent a school from offering prekindergarten.
- In Maryland, one school system contracts with a university to operate several prekindergarten classrooms in public school buildings and allows university students in the last year of their teacher training program to serve as teachers. The students are able to use this experience to fulfill the requirements of their degree program. Mentoring for the teachers is provided by a faculty member of the university.
- Missouri permits teachers in programs outside the public schools to qualify with a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, a one-year certificate of proficiency in child development or child care, or a two-year associate's degree in child care/education. However, teachers holding less than teacher certification are required to complete a minimum of six college hours during the fiscal year to earn credit towards an associate's or bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a related field.

- New Jersey allows teachers in community child care programs to qualify if they receive a Child Development Associate certificate within a year, and work toward completing their bachelor's degree over a period of six years.
- New York's Universal Prekindergarten program gives teachers in programs operated outside the public schools until 2001–02 to meet the requirement for teacher certification, provided there is a program supervisor present who is certified.
- Oklahoma allows teachers to qualify with a special early childhood certificate that is available to those who have a CDA, five years of teaching experience in Head Start, and pass the early childhood certification test.

Teacher Preparation Requirements Other Than Teacher Certification

Thirty-seven state initiatives do not require prekindergarten teachers to have teacher certification, but do require attainment of certain education credentials indicating a background in early childhood development. These requirements provide some assurances that teachers have specialized preparation for working with young children.

- Teachers are required to have at least a college degree with a specialization in early childhood education and development in six states (Arkansas, Kentucky,[69] Nebraska, South Carolina, Texas, and Washington).
- A CDA credential is the minimum requirement for teachers in programs funded through 25 prekindergarten initiatives, including seven state initiatives (Florida [Prekindergarten Early Intervention Program], Georgia, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, and Ohio)[70] as well as the 18 state Head Start models.[71]
- Hawaii's Preschool Open Doors program requires programs to meet the state's child care licensing standards, according to which teachers must have at least a CDA or an associate's degree with coursework in early childhood education, in addition to teaching experience in an early childhood program.

Five states require that teachers have some educational background and/or experience in early childhood education, but do not require them to have specific credentials (California, Colorado, Connecticut, Vermont, and Virginia). This type of policy makes it easier to offer prekindergarten in settings such as Head Start programs and child care centers, where teachers may not have the advanced formal education necessary for certification. However, it is

difficult to assess whether such requirements are sufficient to ensure that all prekindergarten teachers are properly qualified.

- In California, teachers must have a bachelor's degree in child development and a year of experience, an associate's degree in child development with two years of experience, or 15 units in child development with four years of experience.
- In Colorado, a teacher must have credits in early childhood, or a portfolio demonstrating knowledge or necessary skills, or must have work experience and be supervised by someone with a bachelor's degree.
- In Connecticut, teachers may qualify with 12 credits in early childhood education and 1,080 hours of supervised experience over a nine month period in a child care setting that meets state standards.
- Vermont requires "qualified staff," which means the teacher must have the highest qualifications required in the environment of that particular grantee. For example, a CDA is required if the program is in a Head Start center, and teacher certification in early childhood if it is in a public school.
- Virginia requires that teachers have training in early childhood development. The state recommends that, at a minimum, teaching staff have credentials, certifications, and/or postsecondary course work in early childhood education.

Lack of Teacher Requirements

Four state initiatives have no statewide teacher requirements:

- Alabama has no teacher requirements. However, many programs are subject to the requirements of other programs, such as Head Start or Title I, with which they are collaborating.
- Arizona allows districts to set their own standards, and does not have a state certification for early childhood available.
- New Mexico examines program proposals to determine whether teachers have sufficient early childhood preparation, preferring that they have a CDA credential, but not requiring teachers to have any particular qualifications.
- Rhode Island only *recommends* that teachers have a bachelor's degree in early childhood.

In-Service Training

In addition to having the appropriate preparation before they begin teaching classes, it is also essential that teachers have opportunities to continually improve their skills. States can promote ongoing teacher training by requiring it and providing the resources to make it possible.

Most states require some in-service training for their prekindergarten teachers, and some have very specific requirements. For example:

- Arkansas requires that the lead teacher have at least 10 hours of training and five full days of staff development annually, and that aides have three days of staff development annually.
- In the District of Columbia, teachers must have 15 hours of in-service training every year and be re-certified every five years.
- In Ohio, teachers' aides and other staff that have less than a two-year degree must receive 15 hours of in-service training each year for three years and then must receive four hours of training each year after that. Staff with a four-year degree must receive four hours annually. In addition, someone at each site must have completed in-service training in first aid, child abuse recognition, and communicable disease recognition.

In some cases, the in-service training requirements are the same as those for all teachers (elementary and secondary) in the school district or are incorporated into the teacher certification requirements. For example:

- In-service training requirements for prekindergarten teachers are the same as for any other certified teacher in the school district—four days of training per year—in Kentucky.
- All teachers in Wisconsin must earn five semester credits every three years.

A number of states are much less specific. These states require that programs have plans for some type of in-service training, but leave it up to local districts to determine the particular type and amount of training they will provide.

- Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Missouri, New Mexico, and South Carolina indicated that they encourage districts and programs to provide in-service training by requiring them to submit a staff development plan.
- All Head Start programs, including those funded by state Head Start models, are required to have a professional development plan.

Six states do not require all programs to provide in-service training (Alabama, California, Hawaii, Kansas, Louisiana, and Michigan). Teachers in some of these states may receive ongoing training even in the absence of state requirements. However, the lack of state requirements specific to prekindergarten makes it difficult to ensure that all teachers will receive adequate and appropriate in-service training.

- Three of the states without an in-service training requirement (California, Louisiana, and Michigan) indicated that many programs still set aside a portion of their budget for and provide training.

- Many prekindergarten teachers in these states are subject to requirements of other systems that address in-service training. For example, in Michigan, all prekindergarten teachers in programs operated by public schools must meet teacher certification criteria, which include a requirement that teachers complete six credits every five years. However, this requirement does not impact the programs that operate in child care settings.

Resources to Support Professional Development

A stable funding source for teacher education and training helps teachers to attain necessary credentials and participate in professional development opportunities. While most states expect teachers to pay for their own credentialing and programs to cover the costs of in-service training, some states provide specific financial assistance for training through their prekindergarten initiative or other sources.

- Connecticut supports professional development through its Charts-A-Course initiative. The initiative establishes content and standards for training activities, enables early childhood professionals to have formal documentation of their career development, and provides financial assistance for training to income-eligible professionals. A number of state agencies and groups have collaborated on the project, including the Department of Education, the Department of Higher Education, the Department of Children and Families, the Connecticut Head Start Directors Association, the United Way of Connecticut, the Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy at Yale University, and the Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education at Wheelock College, in addition to many others.

- Georgia sponsors free training through the Office of School Readiness, which administers the prekindergarten program.

- Maryland provides intensive training for prekindergarten teachers and other early childhood professionals through its Model for School Readiness project. Participants attend a total of nine full-day training sessions over a period of two years. The project is carried out through a partnership that includes the Maryland State Department of Education, the Maryland Committee for Children, the Maryland State Head Start Association, and Villa Julie College.
- Michigan's School Readiness Program received a three-year grant of $150,000 a year from the Kellogg Foundation for teacher training.
- Missouri allows programs to use prekindergarten funds to cover up to $800 per person in expenses for courses needed to complete an associate's or bachelor's degree in early childhood or a related field.
- Nebraska encourages and supports in-service training by requiring prekindergarten programs to work with one of the state's 14 regional training projects, which are funded with Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) dollars.
- New Jersey has a $2 million scholarship program to support the professional development of teachers in child care programs and enable them to meet the teacher credential requirements of the prekindergarten initiative.
- New York is funding T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) scholarships to help teachers attain the credentials required under the Universal Prekindergarten initiative.
- Oklahoma provides schools with professional development funds for training separately from their allotment for the prekindergarten programs.
- Other states that indicated that they sponsor training opportunities include Hawaii, Louisiana, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Oregon.

Guidelines for a Curriculum

A strong curriculum is another important component of classroom quality. Programs should have sufficient guidance from states so that they can adopt a research-based curriculum that offers children an enriching experience. (See box below for a summary of the basic criteria that a prekindergarten curriculum should meet.) Almost all states provide some general guidelines on a developmentally appropriate curriculum, often offering models or examples that

"My son is definitely learning. The curriculum is full of wonderful books, music and activities. When he comes home, he wants more and is bored watching television. He is already beginning to read."
—Georgia parent

programs may follow. However, no state mandates that all programs adopt a particular curriculum. Instead, they allow each program to tailor its curriculum to meet the particular needs of the children and families it serves.

Georgia and Missouri have the most specific curriculum requirements, but even these states offer programs a great deal of choice:

- Georgia's prekindergarten programs must use a curriculum approved by the state's Office of School Readiness. Approved curricula include Bank Street, Creative Curriculum, High/Scope, High Reach Framework, Montessori, and Scholastic Workshop.
- Missouri takes a similar approach, requiring programs to adopt a research-based curriculum that has been approved by the state's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The curriculum models that have been approved thus far are Project Construct, High/Scope, Creative Curriculum, and Montessori.

While the remaining states do not require any particular curriculum, their local programs often turn to established models for guidance.

- NAEYC standards were mentioned by several states as a model that many programs used, or were encouraged to use, in developing their curricula (Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Iowa, and Nebraska).
- Head Start Performance Standards for an appropriate curriculum are followed by state-funded Head Start models.
- A few states noted that they had developed their own set of standards for programs to use as a guideline. For example, Ohio has an early childhood curriculum guide developed through the Division of Early Childhood Education that serves as a resource. Oklahoma's Developmental Learning Skills for Four-Year-Olds provides programs with a model in developing their curricula. Other states that mentioned similar guidance for programs include Colorado, Connecticut, Kentucky, Nebraska, New York, Texas, and Vermont.
- Two states noted that the public school curriculum for grades prekindergarten–12 provides a framework that programs can use in developing their curricula (Maryland and Massachusetts).

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Essential Elements of a Prekindergarten Curriculum

There are certain basic criteria that any prekindergarten curriculum should meet to ensure that it provides children with a learning experience that is appropriate to their age and stage of development.[72] An appropriate curriculum:

- Engages children actively in the learning process, provides a variety of developmentally appropriate learning experiences, and encourages children to pursue their own interests while respecting the community around them.
- Involves a variety of developmentally appropriate activities, experiences, materials, and media that are selected to engage children in active, meaningful learning.
- Provides a balance of activities, with opportunities for indoor and outdoor activities, child-initiated and teacher-initiated activities, quiet and active play, and individual and group activities.
- Aims to foster positive self-identity and help children to develop social skills and knowledge.
- Encourages children to think, reason, question, and experiment and promotes their language and literacy development.
- Encourages and demonstrates sound health, safety, and nutritional practices and strives to enhance children's physical development and skills.
- Promotes creative expression, representation, and appreciation for the arts, and respect for cultural diversity.
- Reflects parents' choices and goals for their children and respects parents' preferences and concerns.
- Integrates assessment practices that allow for ongoing evaluation of children's progress, and then uses the assessment to adapt the curriculum and teaching to meet the learning needs of the children, communicate with the children's families, and improve the program. Children are assessed through a variety of methods that are appropriate to their stage of development and that recognize the individual variation in learners.

- Iowa, Louisiana, Vermont, and Washington mentioned that their programs use a variety of established research-based curricula, including Creative Curriculum, Reggio philosophy, High/Scope, Emergent, and/or Montessori.

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Supporting Comprehensive Nutrition, Health, and Social Services

Preparing children to enter school entails not only helping them develop early learning skills, but also addressing the physical, emotional, and social problems that many children face that can interfere with their ability to succeed in school and in life. A child will have a difficult time concentrating and learning in school if he is hungry, had no place to sleep the night before, has an undiagnosed hearing or vision problem, is repeatedly absent from school due to illness, or if his family is in crisis. In addition to offering educational activities, prekindergarten programs must also ensure that these other needs are met.

A prekindergarten initiative with comprehensive services recognizes the value of supporting children's overall health and development and enables programs to identify and respond to children's nutritional, health, mental health, and social services needs. It does this by supporting qualified staff who can help determine what children and families need and make referrals and facilitate connections to community resources. It works closely with community partners to take advantage of state, local, or federal resources or programs to support children and families (see box at the end of the chapter for a discussion of some of these additional resources). Head Start offers a model for states to follow when developing a comprehensive prekindergarten initiative (see box below).

Programs that are required to address the totality of children's and families' needs, and are provided with the resources to do so, will ultimately be more effective in helping children start school on the path to success. This chapter examines the extent to which state prekindergarten initiatives address these comprehensive needs and the challenges programs encounter.

Head Start Performance Standards for Comprehensive Services

Head State Performance Standards provide extensive guidelines on how programs are expected to meet children's comprehensive needs.[73] Programs are required to:

- Address children's nutritional needs by working with parents to identify children's individual needs in this area and providing at least one nutritious meal per program day.
- Address children's health needs by ensuring that each child has an ongoing source of health care; performing or obtaining initial health, developmental, and behavioral screenings; establishing procedures to identify any new or recurring health or developmental concerns, such as through periodic observations and recordings; and developing and implementing plans for any necessary follow-up treatment.
- Address children's mental health needs by making arrangements for mental health professionals to be available to identify mental health concerns and help locate any needed treatment and by scheduling regular on-site mental health consultations involving the mental health professional, program staff, and parents.

How States Address Comprehensive Services

While a few state prekindergarten initiatives have detailed guidelines requiring programs to provide comprehensive nutrition, health, and social services, most initiatives do not thoroughly address all of these supports. Children's nutritional needs are addressed by nearly all states,[74] but there is much greater variation as to whether their programs offer health and social services.

Requiring Attention to Children's Health and Social Services

Most state initiatives establish requirements for comprehensive services that at a minimum instruct programs to provide meals, conduct health screenings, address social services needs to at least some extent, and develop some procedures for helping children obtain any needed follow-up treatment. However, there are still differences among these requirements from state to state. Some states outline very specific instructions for the provision of comprehensive

services, while others request locally defined plans. Some fully address both health and social services, while others may address one or both only partially. Regardless of the policies in the state, the services children and families actually receive will ultimately depend on local programs having the resources and commitment to provide them.

Programs that are required to address the totality of children's and families' needs, and are provided with the resources to do so, will ultimately be more effective in helping children start school on the path to success.

Twenty-one state initiatives have strong comprehensive services requirements that are the same or similar to requirements of Head Start Performance Standards:

- Head Start Performance Standards are followed by the 18 state-funded Head Start models (Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington, and Wisconsin). A portion of funding for New Jersey's state Head Start model is targeted to help child care programs offer some of the comprehensive services required by Head Start Performance Standards. Rhode Island is currently considering adopting a similar approach under its Starting RIté Initiative.

- Comprehensive service requirements that are the same as or similar to those of Head Start are used by several state initiatives, including New York's Experimental Prekindergarten Program, Ohio's Public School Preschool, and Washington's Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP). Washington, which designed its initiative based on Head Start, requires that children in ECEAP have a health and dental exam and a developmental screening within 90 days of entering prekindergarten along with any necessary follow-up treatment. All programs are required to have on staff a family support worker or a consultant for mental health care. Some programs collaborate with health departments and bring a certifier for the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) food and nutrition program to the prekindergarten site to enroll eligible children and families. The state takes into account the cost of providing these services when determining the amount of the grant awarded to each program.

Initiatives in nine states have requirements that address health and/or social services to some extent. Several have particularly detailed requirements. However, some have gaps in their provisions for comprehensive services, and the information reported by the states was not sufficient to determine

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"Through a screening performed by ECEAP, it was discovered that my daughter had been born hearing impaired. She had compensated by whatever means so that no one ever suspected she had a problem. After being refered to her doctor for further testing, she was fitted for hearing aides and immediately placed in speech therapy."
—Washington parent

whether children and families receive the total package of comprehensive services required by Head Start.

- Arkansas requires programs to conduct a health screening and developmental assessment of each child and to provide referrals. Programs ensure that children have access to needed assistance by contracting with the Department of Health and coordinating closely with other programs. The state, however, provides less guidance to programs as to what social services to provide. While such flexibility allows programs to respond to the needs of the families in their communities, it may leave the programs without adequate incentive or support to provide this assistance.

- Colorado requires that the local district council, which is responsible for overseeing the community's prekindergarten program, develop a comprehensive plan to address services contributing to children and families' health and well-being, including health care, mental health care, dental care, nutrition, recreation opportunities, social services, and immunizations.

- Connecticut requires programs to connect with community resources, resources for parents, and health resources such as HUSKY, the state's child health insurance program. (This program is supported by state and federal funds under the new federal program—CHIP—which is described in the box below). Programs make referrals to community resources for health and mental health care, provide eye screenings and nutrition screenings, and check immunization records. A nurse practitioner must be associated with each program. Since the initiative is relatively new, programs are still in the process of developing their referral services and building connections to other resources and supports. The state helps programs strengthen their comprehensive service components by providing technical assistance through the Department of Education, the Department of Social Services, and the Department of Public Health.

- Florida requires programs to have a plan for providing services. However, the plans are submitted to the local interagency council rather than the state. As a result, programs vary greatly in the extent to which they provide supports.

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- Iowa has made a clear commitment to providing comprehensive services. The state requires programs to develop a plan for addressing health and safety issues, medical needs, social services, and nutrition. The health and safety plan is expected to address aspects such as teaching parents the importance of lead screening, covering outlets, and other safety measures. In their medical care plan, programs indicate how they will provide access to a health care provider, immunizations, well-child check-ups, and referrals to a nurse and/or medical provider as necessary. Plans for social services may describe activities such as helping parents access temporary assistance for rent, heating, or clothing.

- Kansas requires programs to provide health care, including immunizations, screenings, and any necessary health services such as eye glasses or dental work; counseling; social work services, including referrals; and nutrition.

- Kentucky requires programs to provide health, vision, and developmental screenings and to coordinate with other agencies, including family resource centers, to meet the health and social services needs of children. Yet, the state does not specify what supports children must receive, instead leaving it to the discretion of local programs to assess and respond to families' needs.

- New York's Universal Prekindergarten requires that programs meet children's physical and emotional needs and provide other supports, but does not specify what services are required.

- Virginia requires programs to have a health plan addressing immunizations, vision/hearing/dental screenings, physical check-ups and evaluations, and hearing aids or other assistance when necessary. Programs must also identify available social services, conduct a needs assessment of each family, and have provisions in place for securing the needed assistance. However, there may be some variation in how these services are actually provided.

Encouraging Comprehensive Services Without Requirements

The best way to ensure that children and families receive comprehensive services is to require and fund programs to provide the services. However, several state prekindergarten initiatives that lack specific requirements appear to be successful in encouraging programs to take a holistic approach in serving children and families. Many of these initiatives stress comprehensive services as one of their primary objectives. The initiatives also often encourage prekindergarten programs to coordinate with health care, social services, and other agencies.

- Alabama, Nebraska, New Mexico, Tennessee, and Vermont do not require comprehensive services, but strongly encourage programs to provide them. Each of these initiatives fund only a limited number of prekindergarten projects that are expected to serve as models for how to provide quality prekindergarten. As a result, programs are usually only selected to receive funding if they are able to offer the comprehensive services integral to a quality program. The states report that, despite the lack of requirements, programs generally provide health and social services, often through collaboration with other agencies and programs.

- Georgia does not require programs to provide comprehensive services beyond immunizations and eye/ear/dental screenings. However, it encourages programs to coordinate with community resources for medical and other services and funds resource coordinators for programs serving large numbers of at-risk children.

- In Massachusetts, one of the primary objectives of the initiative is to provide comprehensive early childhood programs and supports. Local communities are each encouraged to develop a strategy for enhancing nutrition, health care, and social services. The state reports that local programs often provide immunizations and screenings. In addition, many programs offer mental health care, such as behavioral consultations in the classroom and consultations outside the classroom with parents, to help them understand their children's behavior and address any problems.

Failure to Address Comprehensive Services

Fourteen states do not establish any requirements or offer any encouragement for programs to provide comprehensive services (Arizona, California, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas,[75] West Virginia, and Wisconsin). A number of these states have most or all of their programs operating in the public schools.

The following examples demonstrate that local programs in public schools and other settings often offer comprehensive services on their own initiative. Yet, these examples also suggest that the lack of overall state support can lead to inconsistency among programs in the extent to which they provide the services. Programs in communities with limited resources will have particular difficulty providing the support children need.

- In Arizona, an FY 1997 auditor general's report concluded that programs in public schools were more likely to provide comprehensive services than

those in private child care centers. The state notes that all programs are now required to meet one of a range of accreditation models. However, since these different models vary in approach to comprehensive services, some inconsistency among programs will remain.

- California reports that most programs make referrals or connect with other agencies that provide health care and social services. Yet, there are no requirements to provide the supports, and programs vary in the extent to which they have access to the resources needed to offer supports.
- Illinois reports that a large percentage of programs provide health care and social services in one form or another, often by making referrals. Yet, since the programs are not required to offer them, some are more effective in meeting children's needs than others.
- In Maryland, some of the public schools operating prekindergarten programs have health clinics and/or social workers to provide services.
- In Wisconsin, some schools with programs offer services through the school nurse and guidance counselor.

Challenges to Providing Comprehensive Services

Many programs currently face significant obstacles to providing comprehensive services. States report that local programs may have difficulty offering these services because of barriers ranging from unavailable or inaccessible resources, to lack of coordination among programs offering different types of services, to opposition among those who believe that providing these services is not an appropriate role for the programs. By offering sufficient financial and technical support, states can help programs overcome these obstacles. (Efforts by states to provide such support to local programs are discussed in Chapter 12.)

- In at least 22 states, one of the primary barriers for programs in providing comprehensive services is an overall lack of resources and funding (California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York [for its Universal Prekindergarten Initiative], Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, and Vermont).
- Even with adequate funding, some programs—particularly those located in rural areas—would not be able to provide services because of their communities' shortage of medical or social services resources. This problem was

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Other Federal and State Resources Help Programs Provide Comprehensive Services

The ability of prekindergarten programs to deliver comprehensive services is affected not just by the state's investment in a particular initiative. It is also affected by the availability of federal resources as well as by the state's and its local communities' *overall* commitment to meeting the needs of children and families.

States can help programs access the resources they need to offer comprehensive services by encouraging programs to use available federal resources. For example:

- The recently enacted Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which is supported by federal funds and state matching funds, can be used to assist prekindergarten programs' efforts to ensure every child has access to affordable health care. This program helps states cover uninsured children in low-wage working families with incomes too high to qualify for Medicaid but too low to afford private coverage. Almost every state in the country now has a Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) up and running. Most states cover children in a family of four with an income up to $33,400 a year. Some states cover children in families with even higher incomes. Prekindergarten programs are a very important link in every state's efforts to spread the word about CHIP and Medicaid to families with eligible children and encourage them to take advantage of this access to health insurance.[76]
- Prekindergarten programs located in child care centers, Head Start centers, and family child care homes can receive reimbursement for meals and snacks through the federal Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Programs located in public schools can receive reimbursement for meals provided to low-income children through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program.

States can also help programs provide comprehensive services by funding initiatives that are separate from, but that complement, their prekindergarten initiatives. For example:

- Alaska supports Head Start programs not only through its state-funded Head Start model but also through a $50,000 grant from the state mental health trust fund for a family wellness model program and through an oral wellness model program.
- Kentucky can support families participating in its prekindergarten initiative through its Family Resource Centers. The centers provide direct support and referrals, including parent and child education, health care and health referrals, literacy tutoring, and adult education. Several additional states support family resource centers as well.
- Vermont provides a grant for mental health care that is coordinated with prekindergarten programs. Communities are developing plans for how they will use the funds. They will support a variety of activities, including training for parents on parenting strategies and on-site technical assistance for programs to help them provide consultations and evaluations that address children's specialized needs.

noted by several states, including Alaska, Iowa, Louisiana, Minnesota, and New Mexico. For example, many villages in Alaska have no social workers or doctors. As a result, some programs receive medical visits only one or two times per year. In Iowa, smaller communities that lack such resources have tried to address this problem by accessing resources from larger communities.

- Delaware, Florida, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico, and Washington mentioned that their programs find it particularly difficult to access certain services, notably mental health and/or dental care. In Washington, communities have been creative in trying to overcome such difficulties, offering "Smile Mobiles"—traveling dental offices that go to the state's prekindergarten programs as well as to child care centers and Head Start programs.

- Programs in South Carolina and Vermont have found that, even when resources are available, transportation to get children and families to services may be lacking.

Inability to coordinate effectively, combined with an overall shortage of resources, also makes it difficult for some programs to provide services:

- Maryland and Texas mentioned barriers to collaboration with health care, social services, and other providers.

- Ohio's Public School Preschool programs have difficulty collaborating to the extent that Head Start programs are able to because the Public School programs have fewer resources. This includes fewer resources for staff who can help facilitate coordination of services.

- Oregon's programs have also had problems coordinating services because agencies are too short-staffed to give as much attention as they want to collaboration.

Encouraging Parent Involvement, Education, and Support

Parent involvement, education, and support are essential components of any good quality early childhood education program. Parents—who know their children better than anyone and are their children's first teachers—must have the opportunity to inform programs about their children's needs to enable programs to be more responsive to individual children. Programs that offer education and assistance to parents can help strengthen parents' ability to support their children and reinforce the learning that occurs in the prekindergarten classroom. For example, programs can work with parents on activities that promote their children's literacy development, such as parents reading with their children. In addition, programs can help parents cope with the economic and emotional stresses that can interfere with their ability to support and nurture their children. They can also assist parents in getting special help to address their children's disabilities.

By engaging parents in their children's education from the beginning, prekindergarten programs set a pattern to be followed as children enter school and continue learning. Parents who are comfortable participating in their children's prekindergarten experiences will be more likely to be involved in their children's education throughout their lives. Continued parent engagement can be an important factor in the performance of schools and students. In fact, studies of individual families show that parent involvement is more important to student success than family income or education.[77]

Intensive efforts by prekindergarten programs to actively engage parents in their children's education are particularly essential for hard-to-reach families—low-income parents, parents from racial or ethnic minority groups, parents who do not speak English, and parents challenged by domestic violence, substance abuse, and other problems. Discrimination, lack of trust, fear, inability to communicate, and a history of negative experiences with educational institutions are all barriers to these parents becoming active in their children's education.

Research demonstrates that making parent-focused efforts an integral part of prekindergarten increases children's chances of success in school and in life, strengthens parent-child relationships, and enables parents to improve their own lives:

- A study of the effects of the Chicago Child-Parent Centers program, an early intervention program that provides quality, comprehensive education for children and includes a strong parent support and involvement component, found that parents participating in the program were more likely to be involved in their children's elementary school. The study also found that children participating in the program were more likely to complete high school.[78]

- A longitudinal study of children who participated in one of three different models of prekindergarten education in the District of Columbia found that parental involvement was an immensely important factor in a child's success in school. Grades and development were significantly higher at the end of prekindergarten for children with high parent involvement.[79]

- A review of 40 early childhood programs found that the programs demonstrating long-term effects in reducing crime and antisocial behavior among those who had participated as children were the programs that combined early childhood education and supports for families.[80]

- Evaluations of several programs that combine early education with support for the family as a whole demonstrate that these programs can have positive effects on parenting. Beneficial outcomes of the programs included better parent-child interaction, improvements in parents' child-rearing behaviors and attitudes, higher expectations by parents for their children's success, and increases in the amount of time that the parents spent with their children. Other positive results were improvements in the home learning environment and an increase in the amount of reading materials in the home. In addition, parents felt more effective in their parental role and were more likely to use community resources.[81]

- A study of a Head Start Family Support Program designed to assist parents to move toward self-sufficiency through help with literacy, employment, and substance abuse found that, as a result of these supports, parents involved made significant gains. High percentages of parents who participated completed high school equivalency programs, gained employment, and sought treatment for substance abuse.[82]

Types of Parent-Focused Efforts

Research demonstrates that making parent-focused efforts an integral part of prekindergarten increases children's chances of success in school and in life, strengthens parent-child relationships, and enables parents to improve their own lives.

In interacting with parents or other caregivers, programs should offer a full range of activities to help parents, or the increasing numbers of grandparents and other relatives caring for children, support their children's education and development. Programs should also have the necessary incentives and the financial and technical assistance to ensure that they can take a comprehensive approach to working with parents that includes:

- **Parent involvement** opportunities enabling parents to take an active role in their child's education and/or prekindergarten program. Parents should be asked what their children need, involved in planning how to meet these needs, and active in carrying out the plans. Parent involvement may consist of activities such as parents volunteering or serving as teacher aides, sitting on boards and setting policy for the program, and/or helping select staff.

- **Parent education** efforts to help parents better understand how their children learn and develop, enable them to build on their parenting skills, and assist them in meeting their children's needs.

- **Parent/family support** that goes beyond working with parents as their child's first teacher, to offering them more comprehensive services to assist them in nurturing and supporting their children. Family support efforts include activities such as helping parents develop education or employment plans, organizing parent support groups on specific topics, providing education or training, offering informal counseling, and connecting families with other community resources. These efforts can be particularly important in helping families who are trying to move from welfare to work.

As programs work to build relationships with parents that enable both parties to best support children, they should strive to include all three of these components—parent involvement, education, and support. Head Start Performance Standards offer a model for how programs can fully address each of them (see box on Head Start Performance Standards for Family Partnerships).

The particular approach a program uses will depend on what strategy it finds most feasible and effective given its resources and the community and families it serves. For example, some may connect parents with other programs or agencies. Others may offer meetings and activities at the program

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site itself. Alternatively, programs may find that the optimal approach is to provide *home visits*—periodic meetings between staff and parents at the parent's home.

Regardless of their approach, programs are likely to be most successful in reaching parents if parents are given choices for how they can participate in their children's prekindergarten experiences. These choices should reflect parents' input about the types of education and involvement activities they would like to see available. Diverse options that suit parents' differing interests and needs will increase the probability that parents will take advantage of these opportunities. For example, parents working full time will be much more likely to participate if activities are scheduled outside of working hours.

Head Start Performance Standards for Family Partnerships

Head Start Performance Standards require that programs undertake a broad range of activities to ensure that parents have the opportunity to offer input concerning their children's prekindergarten experience and learn more about how they can best meet their children's overall needs.[83]

- Programs must offer opportunities for parent involvement in program policy-making and operations. Programs are required to be open at all times to parents, who are encouraged to visit classrooms, participate with children in group activities, and volunteer as teacher's aides.
- Parent education must be provided to help parents foster the growth and development of their children. Parent education efforts should help parents better meet their children's education, health, mental health, and nutritional needs. For example, programs should inform parents about how to enroll their children in health care programs. They should also teach parents how to better help their children make the transition from Head Start to school.
- Programs are required to support families by working with parents to develop Family Partnership Agreements that describe the family's goals and how they plan to meet those goals. Programs must also help parents access community resources, either directly or through referrals, and follow up to see that parents obtain the supports they need. Such supports may include emergency food, housing, clothing, and transportation assistance or education and employment training.
- Two home visits per year must be provided by program staff. These home visits may take place at a site other than the family's home if the parent requests it or if a visit to the home would endanger the safety of the staff.

Overview of State Parent-Focused Efforts

While most state prekindergarten initiatives include some parent-focused efforts, few state initiatives—other than those that are state-funded Head Start models, which adhere to Head Start Performance Standards—make the extensive efforts required by Head Start. Many states require or encourage programs to provide some parent involvement, education, and/or support activities. A number of states also promote home visits as a means of engaging parents. However, besides the Head Start models, only initiatives in Florida, Michigan, New Mexico, Ohio, and Virginia require programs to address parent involvement, parent education, *and* parent support.

Most states that require or encourage parent-focused efforts allow local programs or districts to decide what specific activities to offer. This leads to significant variation in the types and extent of parent involvement, education, and support opportunities. For example, districts participating in New York's Universal Prekindergarten initiative will fulfill the state's requirement that their programs address parent involvement in a number of different ways.[54] One district plans to assist parents in developing their own goals. Parents will participate in support groups and a mentor program, have access to summer activity packets, and choose the topics for district parent meetings and workshops. Another district has given first priority for participation in its prekindergarten program to children whose parents have not yet achieved a high school diploma. These parents will be offered the opportunity to assist in the classrooms and receive credit for this work-study experience. Strategies used by other districts include making home learning kits and activities available to families, providing a family resource room and library, and allowing families to take part in the publication of the class newsletter. Many other district plans did not include opportunities for parents to provide input about the activities they wanted.

Four initiatives—Hawaii, Maine, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia—neither require nor encourage efforts in any of these areas, although there may be some local programs offering parent involvement and education opportunities on their own initiative. Hawaii reports that nearly all programs try to get parents engaged in their child's program to some degree. Maine notes that parent involvement and education are components of most programs, with the programs deciding on their own what types of activities to offer. However, without state requirements to ensure that all programs reach out to parents or state resources to help all programs do so, many programs may be much less likely to offer parent involvement, education, or support activities.

"Due to the program, I have seen the necessity for parent participation in the education of our children, and plan to continue an active role throughout my children's school years."
—Colorado parent

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is the parent-focused activity that state prekindergarten initiatives are most likely to provide. Most states require or at least encourage programs to involve parents. However, states generally did not provide sufficient information to assess the quality of their efforts.

- Parent involvement is required by initiatives in 23 states (Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington) as well as by the state-funded Head Start models (Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington, and Wisconsin).

- Although not required, parent involvement is actively encouraged in 10 states (Arizona, District of Columbia, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, New Jersey, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, and Wisconsin).

While most state initiatives offer parent involvement opportunities, the specific activities programs are required or encouraged to offer differ significantly among states. For example:

- Nine states mentioned a requirement that parents be included on councils overseeing programs, including California, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, and Vermont.

- Other states require programs to provide a description of their plan for parent involvement. For example, in Virginia, programs must indicate how they will include parents in planning and programs, schedule meetings that encourage attendance, provide regular and frequent communication with parents, and allow parent participation in classrooms. In Iowa, local programs are also required to provide a plan for parent involvement, but they are given much discretion about what aspects of parent involvement to address in their plans.

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Parent Education

Helping parents learn about how their children develop and other parenting issues is another common way in which prekindergarten initiatives reach out to parents:

- Parent education is required by initiatives in 14 states (Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Ohio, South Carolina, Virginia, and Vermont) as well as by state-funded Head Start models.

- Programs are encouraged to provide parent education in nine states—Arizona, District of Columbia, Iowa, Maryland, Minnesota, New York, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin.

States differ widely as to what their parent education requirements entail. States will generally permit local programs to develop their own strategies for meeting the requirements, depending on the needs of the parents. For example, Connecticut's School Readiness initiative allows programs to fulfill the requirements by referring parents to GED and other courses, conducting courses for parents, addressing parenting issues at meetings, holding conversations with parents individually, or through a variety of other ways.

While states often leave local programs a great deal of discretion in their parent education activities, some states provide at least general guidance in these efforts. For example, Virginia requires programs to provide instruction on child development, health and nutrition, resource materials on topics such as parent-child relationships or child behavior, and access to family literacy programs.

Some states encourage programs to provide parent education by tapping into other available resources. For example:

- Family resource centers may be used to provide parent education in Kentucky and Tennessee.

- Missouri encourages prekindergarten programs to use resources available through its statewide parent education initiative, Parents as Teachers.

- Nebraska funds a parenting education program that is available to all prekindergarten projects.

- State funding for parent education in South Carolina is provided separately from the prekindergarten initiative. This funding supports a parent education coordinator in each school district.

Family Support Efforts

In addition to providing opportunities for parent involvement and education that enable parents to support their children's learning, some states also make broader efforts to help parents to support their children. Programs may be required or encouraged to connect parents with job training opportunities, social services, or emergency food and shelter programs. State efforts to support families also may encompass some of the comprehensive nutrition, health care, mental health care, and social services discussed in the previous chapter. One way in which states can support families that is especially important given the current welfare law is to help parents move from welfare to work.

Family support efforts offer parents help and encouragement in meeting the demands of work and family life so they, in turn, can do a better job of nurturing their children. These efforts build on family strengths while meeting families' multiple needs. The best programs tailor their activities to meet the individual needs of those they serve and offer support to families before problems arise. They connect families to existing resources while identifying and filling in any gaps to create a continuous web of family supports.

A number of states require or encourage local prekindergarten programs to provide family support:

- Family support efforts are required by prekindergarten initiatives in nine states (Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, and Virginia) and the state-funded Head Start models.

- Programs are encouraged to provide family support activities in 13 states: Alabama, Arizona, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Nebraska, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin.

Local prekindergarten programs adopt different strategies for assisting families. Some link families to family support programs that are on-site or in the family's neighborhood. Some promote peer support. For example, several programs in Iowa have encouraged the development of networks among their families so that they are able to provide one another with support, such as by carpooling and reducing isolation in other ways.

Several states make financial resources available specifically to assist programs in their efforts to provide family support. For example:

- Georgia provides $17 million in supplemental grants for family support activities. These may include connecting parents with resources such as

parenting skills seminars, education and job training, literacy classes, employment activities, counseling, transportation, emergency assistance for utilities, and assistance for their children's transition to kindergarten. This grant funding is provided on a competitive basis to programs serving high numbers of at-risk children.

- Minnesota has a separate appropriation of $250,000 for Head Start-Early Childhood Family Education partnerships, which foster a number of activities, including parent support.
- In Wisconsin, programs that provide outreach to parents, which may include family support efforts, are reimbursed by the state at a rate that is 20 percent higher than the standard reimbursement rate.

"ECEAP has done many wonderful things for my family and myself. The support I received from the ECEAP staff is wonderful. They were always there for us. Someone to talk to that could help. They gave us needed resources, we needed dental help and they gave us the numbers; the food bank when we needed food. Parent meetings had a different topic monthly of very useful information... They helped my children learn and develop with confidence, and I gained so much confidence I opened up my own business. There are so many wonderful things ECEAP has given; I'm so thankful for all the program did for us."

—Washington parent

Supporting Families by Helping Parents Move from Welfare to Work

Given the new work requirements of the welfare law, activities that support families' efforts to move from welfare to work are particularly critical. These activities may include helping parents search for jobs or arrange full-day child care, if the prekindergarten program itself does not offer a full-day program. (States' efforts to meet the needs of working parents by providing full-day care and education, either through the prekindergarten initiative itself or through coordination with other programs, are discussed in Chapter 13.)

Across the country, local Head Start programs are employing innovative strategies to help families move from welfare to work. The programs are providing on-site adult education, making internship and job shadowing opportunities available, offering peer support and intensive help to hard-to-serve families, working with employment agencies to help parents find and keep jobs, and helping parents arrange loans to start their own businesses. Head Start programs offer parents these opportunities by coordinating with diverse partners, including state and local agencies, schools, private businesses, and private non-profit agencies.[85]

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Some states are also making efforts to meet the needs of families moving from welfare to work through their prekindergarten initiatives. Most of these efforts are tied to Head Start models. For example:

- Alaska's Department of Community and Regional Affairs, which administers the state's Head Start model, is collaborating with the Division of Public Assistance to have Head Start programs train interested parents to become Head Start and child care workers.[56]
- Arkansas provides training for directors of prekindergarten and Head Start programs to help them understand the new obligations welfare reform places on parents so that the programs can work more effectively with them. The state also encourages prekindergarten programs to coordinate with child care programs on eligibility and other requirements so that families' services are not interrupted as they make the transition from welfare to work.
- Hawaii's state funds for Head Start are specifically targeted to extend the Head Start day to meet the needs of families under welfare reform.
- Minnesota held a conference that addressed strategies for building partnerships between Workforce Centers (which offer "one-stop-shopping" for employment-related information and assistance) and Head Start.
- New Mexico uses its state-funded Head Start model to serve families participating in the welfare-to-work program. To help meet the needs of these families, the state strongly encourages programs to provide arrangements for the full day and full year, including nights, weekends, and holidays. Programs are expected to offer extended-day and extended-year schedules themselves or through arrangements with child care or other providers.
- Washington provides prekindergarten programs with information about the state's Work First program as well as jobs programs so that they can help parents seeking employment.

Home Visits

Home visits are a useful way in which programs can reach out to parents. If conducted sensitively, home visits can have a number of benefits. They encourage teachers to get to know parents in a comfortable environment that is more likely to foster positive teacher-parent relationships. They offer an opportunity for meaningful communication about the child. They also help teachers to understand more about the child's background and suggest appropriate home-based learning activities that will support the child's develop-

ment. For those states that provide more comprehensive services, home visits offer a useful way for staff to identify other health, mental health, and/or social services needs that may not be evident from interactions with the family outside the home.

Home visits should be voluntary on the family's part, and should not intrude on their privacy. It is also important to address the concern, expressed by several states, about program staff visiting homes in unsafe neighborhoods. Sometimes visitors are sent in pairs. In other cases, visits may be conducted at a setting other than the home that is agreed upon by the parent and program staff. (Head Start offers this alternative.) This still allows parents and teachers to learn from one another in a comfortable environment outside the school.

Home visits are provided by programs in a number of states:

- Home visits are required by 10 state initiatives (Georgia, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Nebraska, Ohio, South Carolina, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington) and the state-funded Head Start models.
- Home visits are encouraged, but not required, in at least 10 states (Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Missouri, New York,[87] Texas, and Wisconsin).[88]

12

Supporting Quality Through Technical Assistance, Financial Support, and Monitoring

In addition to establishing strong requirements and providing sufficient financial resources overall, prekindergarten initiatives can support quality by providing technical assistance, targeted funding for quality improvements, and regular monitoring. Through technical assistance efforts, states can help prekindergarten programs understand how to meet quality requirements. By providing funds that are specifically aimed at promoting quality, states can emphasize the importance of quality and make it possible for programs to improve. With regular monitoring efforts, states can ensure that programs are fulfilling all requirements, determine which programs need additional assistance, and identify programs that should be discontinued because they consistently fail to meet requirements.

Evaluation is another tool that states can use to bolster the quality of their initiatives. The evaluation process offers an opportunity for states to identify areas for improvement and assess the impact of the initiative on children, families, and communities. Evaluations are not discussed in depth in this chapter, but the findings of several state studies are described in Appendix A.

Technical Assistance for Quality

Many states indicated that they help programs meet and exceed the quality requirements by providing technical assistance. States do this through a range of activities, from having state agency staff visit local programs, to providing training, to making assistance available through regional training centers. For example:

- Arkansas provides technical assistance through the state agency's own staff as well as through a contract with a university for early childhood consultants.
- In California, technical assistance is provided to local programs through consortia of counties.
- Connecticut is promoting quality by developing benchmarks. Local programs will be able to use the benchmarks as guidelines in assessing their own quality and determining how they can improve. Connecticut also has regional projects designed to assist programs working toward accreditation. The projects are a component of the state's Charts-A-Course program, a collaborative effort among several state agencies, organizations, and institutions.
- Illinois has staff from high quality prekindergarten programs available to provide technical assistance to their colleagues working in other programs.
- Iowa offers training and technical assistance both through the state agency and through funding for a network of early childhood specialists conveniently located to programs.
- Kentucky has five early childhood regional training centers available as well as preschool resource classrooms to serve as models.
- Maryland provides technical assistance through its statewide professional development initiative, the Model for School Readiness. The initiative offers intensive training to prekindergarten, kindergarten, and prekindergarten special education programs. Participants attend a total of nine full-day training sessions over a period of two years. The project is carried out through a public/private partnership.
- Fifteen other states that indicated that they provide technical assistance to local programs include Alabama, Arizona, District of Columbia, Georgia, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Vermont, and Washington.

Targeted Financial Assistance for Quality

The most basic factor in determining whether prekindergarten programs will be able to achieve and maintain a high level of quality is the size of a state's financial investment in the initiative. Even if a state has strong quality requirements, they will be difficult, if not impossible, to follow if a program is not well-funded. Without adequate financial support, programs cannot pay

salaries sufficient to attract qualified teachers, maintain low child/staff ratios and small class sizes, purchase books, blocks, paints, and other supplies, pay for training, or keep classroom facilities safe and secure.

In addition to making a high overall investment in their initiatives, states can also promote quality by providing targeted financial assistance. Some states use a portion of their prekindergarten funding to provide small grants to local programs while others take advantage of funding from other sources to support specific activities, such as accreditation.

Quality Enhancement Grants

"Enhancement grants" or "mini-grants" help programs improve their quality in eight states—Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, Maryland, Nebraska, Vermont, and Washington. Nebraska and Washington, noted that they are only able to provide grants in those instances when additional funding is available after the basic allocation has been made to programs. States use grants for numerous purposes. For example:

- Arkansas provides grants for the purchase of additional supplies and materials.
- Delaware makes one-time funding available to new programs so they can purchase materials, renovate facilities, and make other improvements necessary to meet the quality requirements.

Accreditation Assistance

A number of states provide assistance to help programs become accredited through the federally funded Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) or other funding sources.

- Nebraska and New Mexico use CCDBG funds to help programs become accredited.
- Rhode Island provides financial support for accreditation through the Department of Education's Keys to Quality project.
- At least 27 additional states with prekindergarten initiatives fund projects through the Department of Education and/or Department of Human Services to support accreditation, according to a recent review of state policies (Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin).[51]

State Head Start Funding to Support Quality

Some of the states with state-funded Head Start models target at least some of their funds toward improving the quality of existing programs. For example:

- Alaska uses some of its state Head Start funds to support new buildings and renovation, equipment, collaboration, and salary increases.
- New Hampshire uses its state funds to supplement staff salaries. However, these funds are very limited.
- In New Jersey, a portion of the state's funding for its Head Start model is used to help community-based child care programs meet some of the comprehensive requirements of Head Start.
- Ohio uses 1 percent of the budget (of each of its two initiatives) to help Head Start agencies and school districts recruit and train staff, improve management capacity, comply with Head Start Performance Standards, and develop collaborative practices.
- Oklahoma includes enhancing existing programs as one of the purposes of its state-funded Head Start model.

Ensuring Quality Through Monitoring

No matter how comprehensive a prekindergarten initiative's standards are, states cannot ensure that programs achieve positive results without regularly scheduled monitoring visits. Monitoring enables states to identify programs that are not maintaining an adequate level of quality. States can then provide technical assistance to help programs improve, or terminate funding if they continuously fail to meet requirements.

States vary widely in their approaches to monitoring prekindergarten programs. While some conduct annual reviews involving site visits, a large number rely only on written reports from programs, or have no state-level monitoring targeted to prekindergarten programs at all. Although it is important that states review program reports, budgets, and other materials to ensure that the program is fiscally and administratively sound, these reviews are not adequate for monitoring purposes. Monitoring must involve regular visits to programs to observe the safety of the facilities, the interaction between children and teachers, and other features affecting the quality of children's prekindergarten experience.

States Monitoring Programs Through Regular Site Visits

No matter how comprehensive a prekindergarten initiative's standards are, states cannot ensure that programs achieve positive results without regularly scheduled monitoring visits.

Fifteen state prekindergarten initiatives (other than state Head Start models, which are discussed below) incorporate regular on-site monitoring of programs (Alabama, Arkansas, California, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Nebraska, New Mexico, Ohio, South Carolina,[90] Tennessee, Vermont, and Washington).[91]

- Ohio conducts two annual on-site reviews as well as additional visits based on a data-driven system that enables the state to determine which programs would most benefit from a review.
- Tennessee makes two visits a year—one announced and one unannounced.
- Six initiatives require that on-site reviews be conducted once a year (Arkansas, Georgia, Nebraska, New Mexico, South Carolina, and Vermont).
- Alabama provides site visits to each program at least once a year, including scheduled visits and visits according to programs' needs. However, these site visits are generally used to provide technical assistance rather than for regulatory purposes.
- Louisiana monitors programs every other year.
- California and Iowa conduct reviews about once every three years. While Kansas has no set monitoring policy, it also plans to visit programs once every three years.
- Washington conducts reviews once every four years.
- Michigan reviews its competitive grant-funded programs at least once in each three-year funding cycle and monitors its school district programs about once every 10 years.

States With Insufficient Monitoring Efforts

Twenty-one states have prekindergarten initiatives that do not require sufficient monitoring to ensure that their programs are providing high quality experiences for children. They either fail to require any state-level monitoring or only require written reports from programs without on-site visits to observe classrooms.

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Twelve states have no requirements for state-level monitoring that are incorporated in and specific to their prekindergarten initiatives (Colorado, District of Columbia, Florida, Hawaii, Maine, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, West Virginia, and Wisconsin). Programs that are part of another system, such as child care or public schools, will be monitored through their oversight agency. Yet, these monitoring efforts are not targeted directly at prekindergarten programs.

- In Florida, West Virginia, and Wisconsin, monitoring is conducted by local school districts rather than at the state level.
- The District of Columbia, New Jersey, Oklahoma, and Texas only monitor programs as part of the overall review of the school or school district. It is not clear whether these school reviews involve any efforts to look specifically at the prekindergarten programs. In addition, such monitoring generally applies only to programs operated within the schools, and not those in other settings.
- Although Colorado has separate prekindergarten standards, the state leaves responsibility for monitoring all of its programs to the child care licensing agency.
- In Hawaii, programs are monitored by the child care licensing agency.
- In Maine, programs are monitored by child care licensing and child development services (the state special education system for children birth to five).

Nine states only require "desk-top" reviews—reviews of submitted documents without regular visits to the sites (Connecticut, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, and Virginia).[32] In some of these states, on-site visits are made at least occasionally, either by the state on an informal basis or by local monitoring teams. For instance:

- In Connecticut and Massachusetts, local community councils are responsible for monitoring programs and the state visits communities to assist the councils.
- Illinois makes site visits to provide technical assistance and evaluate programs.
- Kentucky requires districts to conduct an annual program evaluation and the state provides quality checks of programs that request them through the preschool resource classrooms project.

- New York plans to have state staff make on-site visits to its Universal Prekindergarten programs, based on districts' needs. However, the law does not specifically state how frequently visits must be made.

Reliance on Direct Grantees to Monitor Subcontractors

The way in which a state monitors programs that receive funding directly from the state may differ from the way in which it monitors programs that subcontract with another agency. Three states noted that the state monitored directly funded programs to at least some extent (either through the initiative itself or through some other system), but that it was up to the direct grantee to monitor any programs with which it was subcontracting (Maryland, New Jersey, and Oklahoma). While the direct grantee may carefully monitor other programs, without state monitoring it may be difficult to ensure that quality requirements are consistently followed across the state by all programs.

State Approaches to Monitoring Their Head Start Models

Federal Head Start grantees are monitored once every three years by the federal Department of Health and Human Services for compliance with Head Start Performance Standards. States funding Head Start models vary, however, in whether they provide their own monitoring in addition to federal efforts:

- The state supplements the federal monitoring efforts by having state staff accompany the federal team on visits to programs or making some other efforts in 12 states funding Head Start models (Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine,[93] Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma,[94] Oregon, and Rhode Island[95]).

- Other states with state-funded Head Start models, including the District of Columbia, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Washington, and Wisconsin, do not provide any additional monitoring to supplement federal efforts.

Responding to Programs Not Meeting Requirements

When monitoring reveals that a program is not complying with quality requirements, states generally respond by helping the program develop an improvement plan and assisting it to come into compliance. (In those states where it is the responsibility of the local district to monitor programs, the response to non-compliance—such as providing technical assistance—is also the responsibility of the district. In states funding Head Start models that rely on the federal government to monitor programs without offering state-level support, the response would be left to the federal Head Start agency.)

If a program continues to fall short of meeting quality standards, funding may be withdrawn. While defunding of programs is relatively rare, eight states mentioned that they removed funding from a program on at least one occasion (Arkansas, Georgia, Iowa, Maryland, Michigan, Oregon, Vermont, and Wisconsin).

Georgia offers an innovative approach in addressing instances of non-compliance. The state has a peer review committee which provides recommendations on whether to terminate the contract of a prekindergarten program that is not in compliance with the initiative's quality requirements.

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PART IV

Promoting Access to State Prekindergarten Initiatives

A child who is eligible for a prekindergarten program operating in her community may face obstacles that prevent her from participating. Her family may lack transportation to bring her to the program, or may be unable to communicate with program staff because of language barriers. She may have disabilities or special needs and require a program that provides her with extra attention. Her parents may work full time and be unable to make use of a part-day/part-year program. As a result, even a program that is richly funded, open to all families in a community, and designed to ensure quality, may not be serving all children who need it.

The costs of prekindergarten for families can also create a barrier to access. While most states recognize the value of prekindergarten, and do not charge families a fee for the core program, many states charge a fee for an extended day. If fees for the extended day are not set at levels that guarantee that programs remain affordable to families, some families may be discouraged from participating even in the core prekindergarten program.

Although they are not discussed in this report, active outreach efforts to inform parents of the availability of prekindergarten programs are integral to making programs accessible as well. Strong efforts at every level—state, local, and program—must be initiated to ensure that parents know about the existence of prekindergarten programs in their communities.

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This section focuses on the different approaches states have taken to adopt the third section of the blueprint: ensuring the accessibility of prekindergarten. Chapters include:

- Designing Prekindergarten Programs to Meet the Needs of Working Parents
- Offering Transportation to Ensure Access
- Providing Programs in Children's Home Language
- Providing Access to Children with Disabilities and Other Special Needs
- Establishing Fee Policies That Ensure the Accessibility of Prekindergarten

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Designing Prekindergarten Programs to Meet the Needs of Working Parents

In addition to helping children enter school ready to succeed, prekindergarten programs should be structured to address the needs of parents, especially low-income parents, who are working and striving to become self-sufficient. Currently, 60 percent of three- and four-year-olds have mothers in the labor force.[96] Programs that operate for only two or three hours a day can be inaccessible for these working parents. The work requirements of the current welfare law make it even more important for programs to address the schedules of working parents, so that children will be able to participate in prekindergarten as their parents move from welfare to work.

To meet the needs of working parents, it is essential that prekindergarten programs operate on a full-day/full-year schedule, either directly through the programs themselves or through coordination with other programs and resources. If a full-day/full-year option is not available, scheduling problems can be an insurmountable barrier to participation for many families and their children. Programs operating part time leave working parents scrambling to find supplemental care and transportation. Such challenges can discourage parents who are trying to work and be independent while giving their children the opportunity to receive the prekindergarten education they need for a strong start.

Providing Full-Day Programs

The optimal prekindergarten schedule is a full-day/full-year option (eight to 12 hours) to support parents who must work full time. Full-day/full-year programs are most accessible for families and least disruptive for children if children are able to spend the entire day and the entire year at the same site. This is preferable to transporting children to another setting for after-school care

Sixty percent of three- and four-year-olds have mothers in the labor force.

or requiring parents to make other arrangements for the remaining hours, as it avoids asking children to deal with different locations, teachers, rules, and expectations. Allowing children to remain at the same site enhances their sense of security and provides greater continuity of care. It enables parents to avoid the difficulties involved in finding, evaluating, and maintaining multiple arrangements. Single-site programming can also be more reliable. With multiple arrangements, it is more likely that one of the arrangements will fall through, causing parents to lose time from work or possibly lose their job.

Many prekindergarten programs, particularly those located in child care settings that already operate for a full day, are able to provide a full day at one site. However, if a local prekindergarten program cannot offer an extended-hour or extended-year schedule on site, it can coordinate with child care or other programs to make a longer day feasible. Programs taking this approach should strive to make it as convenient as possible for families—for example, by transporting children safely from one location to the other.

Most Initiatives Do Not Directly Fund Full-Day/Full-Year Programs

Despite the importance of full-day/full-year programs to working families, the majority of initiatives are structured to provide only part-day/part-year prekindergarten:

- Thirty-seven state prekindergarten initiatives generally support part-day classes of four hours a day or less. This includes 22 separate prekindergarten initiatives—Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York (its two initiatives), Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin[97]—as well as the 15 state-funded Head Start models in Alaska, Delaware, District of Columbia, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington, and Wisconsin. Some of these initiatives only support a two-and-one-half-hour per day program, which can make it difficult to squeeze in all of the activities needed to help children learn and develop. Parents may spend more time getting their children ready for the program and transporting them back and forth between prekindergarten and home than the time children actually spend in prekindergarten.

It is essential that prekindergarten programs operate on a full-day/full-year schedule, either directly through the programs themselves or through coordination with other programs and resources.

- Seven states have initiatives where programs primarily operate on a school-day schedule of about five to seven hours a day (Arkansas, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Virginia). In addition, Oklahoma changed its policies in 1998 so that, while programs are still only required to operate for a minimum of two-and-one-half hours, the state covers the additional cost if a district chooses to provide school-day hours.

- State initiatives that operate on a part-day or school-day schedule generally also use a part-year schedule that follows the school calendar. This schedule means that parents have to spend time and energy searching for a summer child care arrangement and children must readjust to new teachers, surroundings, or classmates after only about nine months.

Supporting Full-Day Services

While many states' initiatives are not structured to provide, and do not use, prekindergarten funds for full-day/full-year programs, a significant number of states are making some efforts to increase the availability of a full-time option. A few states actually require and fund programs to offer a full-day/full-year schedule. Many additional states coordinate their prekindergarten initiatives with other programs and resources for full-day/full-year programs.

Funding Full-Day/Full-Year Programs Through Prekindergarten Initiatives

Only three states support full-day and/or full-year programming by both providing the necessary funding and requiring that it be offered by at least a certain percentage of programs:[25]

- Connecticut's School Readiness initiative emphasizes the importance of meeting the needs of full-time working families. The state provides programs with full reimbursement ($7,000 per child) for children participating for the full day and full year. It also requires that at least 60 percent of available slots be for full-day/full-year participation. The state further encourages full-day/full-year programs by requiring communities to assess the need for these programs among their families as part of a local planning process. Based on the information gathered in these assessments, several communities in Connecticut decided to go beyond minimum requirements

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and have *all* of their programs operate for the full day and full year. As a result, the actual percentage of children attending full-day/full-year programs is 83 percent.

- Massachusetts' Community Partnerships supports full-day/full-year programming to meet the needs of working families, which is the target population of the initiative. The state funds programs serving children for the full day and full year and requires that full-day/full-year programs be provided to at least one-third of the children participating in the initiative. The actual percentage of children attending full time is about 35 percent. The state also promotes full-day/full-year programming by encouraging local community partnership councils to consider the range of schedules parents face—full-day for those working on a regular full-day schedule as well as flexible hour programs for parents working different shifts—in developing plans and policies for implementing the initiative.

- Hawaii's Preschool Open Doors funds full-day programs for all children. However, the initiative supports only a nine month, rather than full-year, schedule. The state provides funds directly to parents, who can then select programs with operating hours that meet their work schedules.[99]

Three state initiatives do not require programs to provide full-day/full-year services, but offer at least some funding support for extended hours:

- California indicated that it provides additional funding if a program operates for the full day. However, the state does not require programs to operate on this schedule, and only 6 percent of sites actually offer a full-day program.

- Florida's Early Childhood Intervention Program does not require programs to provide full-day services, but the state's funding approach offers an incentive for programs to offer such services. The state requires programs to operate for a minimum six-hour day, but allows them to earn additional "full-time equivalent" credits (FTEs)—up to 1.67 FTEs per pupil—if they serve children for a full working day. The state uses the FTE count to determine the total amount of funding a program receives.[100] About half of the children participating in the initiative attend full-working-day programs.

- Maryland provided a significant amount of additional funding for its initiative—$4.4 million dollars per year through FY 2003—as part of a broader school reform measure (School Accountability Funds for Excellence, or SAFE). It is encouraging local school systems to use some of these new funds for extended-hour care.

Coordinating Prekindergarten Initiatives with Other Programs for Full-Day/Full-Year

While most states do not fund full-day/full-year programs through their prekindergarten initiatives, which is the most efficient way to ensure they are available, a number of initiatives are coordinated with other programs to provide an extended day and/or extended year.[101]

- Nine states indicated that a significant proportion of their programs are providing extended hours through other funding sources, such as child care subsidies, Title I, local funds, or separate state programs (Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Nebraska, and New York).

- A handful of states—including Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Iowa, and Vermont—indicated that some of their programs operate on a year-round basis. However, extended-year services are funded by sources other than the state prekindergarten initiative and usually offered by only a small proportion of programs.

Nine states described specific efforts to encourage coordination of prekindergarten programs with other programs and funding sources so they are able to provide full-time care and education. In most of these states, the prekindergarten funds are used to support the core part-day program, and other resources are used for the extended hours. For example:

- Arkansas contracts with school districts to allow them to use child care funding for before- and after-school care for prekindergarten children. Staff from the state's five early childhood regional centers meet with school principals and superintendents to discuss the need for programs that provide extended-hour care and help them understand how the child care assistance program works.

- Colorado has a pilot project operating in 12 communities that encourages the communities to combine prekindergarten funding with child care funding to provide full-day comprehensive programs.

- Illinois gives extra consideration in the grant process to prekindergarten programs coordinating with other programs to offer full-time services.

- Kentucky supports Family Resource Centers, which often provide after-care following the prekindergarten program and in some communities make transportation available from prekindergarten to the centers.

"As a single parent, I would never be able to afford the quality child care my son receives... Academically my son excels, thanks to the care, support and instruction from the staff."
—Colorado parent

- Maryland helps parents access extended-hour care by disseminating resource and referral information about child care to all prekindergarten sites.
- Missouri gives extra consideration in the grant evaluation process to applicants who plan to provide full-day and/or full-year programs. The state expects programs to offer the extended hours through the use of other funding sources such as Title I or local funds.
- In New Mexico, where the prekindergarten funds are used to support a range of program models, the funds themselves are sometimes used to extend the day or year of existing part-day/part-year programs. While not all programs use prekindergarten funds for this purpose, and may instead use them to fund the core part-day or full-day program, the option is available if a community views it as the best use of the resources.
- New York encourages collaboration for full-day/full-year programs through requirements for community needs assessments or comprehensive plans. Through a planning process, communities are able to evaluate the need for full-day/full-year services among the families in their communities and subsequently determine the extent to which full-time programs should be offered.
- Tennessee requires programs to provide extended-hour and extended-year (260 days) care as needed, using child care funds.

Coordinating State-Funded Head Start Models with Other Resources

Most Head Start programs operate on a part-day, part-year schedule. However, a number of states are incorporating strategies to support or encourage full-day/full-year scheduling into their state Head Start models.

Some states are using their state Head Start funds to enable programs to offer a full-day/full-year schedule:

- Three states (Connecticut, Hawaii, and New Jersey) indicated that their state Head Start funds are specifically targeted toward providing full-day, full-year and/or extended-day programs.
- Oklahoma gives Head Start programs the option of using state funds to provide extended hours.

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Other states are encouraging their Head Start programs to offer full-day/full-year programs through coordination with child care programs and child care subsidies. Such efforts were discussed by nine states funding Head Start models (Delaware, Maine, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, and Washington). For example:

- Maine strongly encourages partnerships between Head Start and child care that allow programs to offer a full-day schedule. The state has helped foster the partnerships by combining its Head Start and child care offices into a single agency and by giving priority to partnerships in distributing child care funds. These efforts have paid off—all Head Start grantees have partnerships. Of the 3,531 state- and federally funded Head Start children, 574 (16 percent) are served through the partnerships.
- Minnesota offers competitive grants for innovative collaborative efforts.
- New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Washington, through their child care subsidy programs, provide the full-day reimbursement rate to child care providers that accept Head Start children for that part of the day not covered by Head Start.
- In Ohio, more than 6,000 eligible children are served through Head Start and child care partnerships. The state makes the use of child care funds easier by allowing families to continue receiving child care assistance throughout the Head Start program year, even if their income rises above the state eligibility cutoff for child care assistance. This measure helps guarantee stability for programs receiving both Head Start and child care funds and enables children to participate in the programs without interruption.

Supporting Families with a Five-Day Work Week

In addition to operating 12 months a year and eight to 12 hours per day, meeting the needs of working families requires programs to operate for a full five-day work week. However, some programs believe that by operating fewer than five days a week they can better serve the needs of their children, parents, and staff. They find that teachers and families benefit when classes are held only four days a week, leaving the fifth day available for teacher training or parent-teacher conferences. Given that the welfare law imposes work requirements for our poorest families, this approach is increasingly problematic. It is important that programs seek alternative strategies for training and parent-teacher conferences. If a program finds that it must operate for fewer than

five days a week, at a minimum it should assist working parents in making alternate child care arrangements for the remaining days. Programs using the fifth day for parent-teacher conferences should also help working parents by making additional conference times available during non-working hours.

A number of state prekindergarten initiatives allow programs to offer classes fewer than five days a week, including state-funded Head Start models which, in accordance with Head Start Performance Standards, require programs to operate a minimum of only four days a week.

A five-day-a-week schedule is used by all programs funded by 19 state initiatives (Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida [Prekindergarten Early Intervention Program], Georgia, Hawaii, Louisiana, Maryland, New Jersey, New York [Universal Prekindergarten], Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin).[102]

Thirty-five state prekindergarten initiatives have at least some programs operating fewer than five days a week—initiatives in 17 states (Alabama, Colorado, Florida [State Migrant Prekindergarten Program], Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York [Experimental Prekindergarten], Vermont, Washington, and West Virginia)[103] in addition to the 18 state-funded Head Start models (Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington, and Wisconsin). For example:

- In Delaware, about one-quarter of the children attend four days a week and about three-quarters attend five days a week.
- In Vermont, about 60 percent of children attend one to two days, 35 percent attend three to four days, and 5 percent attend five days a week.
- In Colorado, Illinois, and Michigan, most programs operate four days a week.

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Offering Transportation to Ensure Access

Having a prekindergarten program with openings in a community is not enough to guarantee that families will be able to use the program. Many families may need some help getting their children to and from programs, especially those families living in rural areas or areas with inadequate public transportation. A 1995 government survey found that 57 percent of urban, 33 percent of suburban, and 28 percent of rural welfare households did not own a vehicle.[104] Public transportation often fails to fill the gap for these families, even in more populated areas.[105] Therefore, if prekindergarten programs do not offer transportation or receive the necessary resources for providing it, they will be inaccessible for many families. The lack of transportation can be a particular problem for working families whose children receive extended-hour care at a separate location from the prekindergarten site. As discussed in the previous chapter, these families need a way for their children to get from one program to another while parents work.

Unfortunately, most states neither require local programs to provide transportation nor make additional funding available for this purpose. Programs that opt to provide transportation face covering the costs on their own. This represents a significant burden, particularly since the programs often already struggle to cover basic prekindergarten expenses. As a result, many local programs choose not to offer transportation, even if this decision deprives some families of access to prekindergarten.

Requiring Local Programs to Provide Transportation

Only a few states, besides the Head Start models, appear to have strong transportation policies.

- Transportation is required by six state initiatives (Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Wisconsin)[107] and by the 18 state-funded Head Start models (Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington, and Wisconsin). Programs funded through the Head Start models must follow Head Start Performance Standards, which require that transportation be made available if necessary to enable children and families to participate.

- Sixteen states indicated that while local programs are not required to provide transportation, at least some offer it on their own initiative (Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington). Most of these states were unable to provide specific data on the proportion of programs providing transportation. However, Washington indicated that about three-quarters of the sites (204 out of 274) provide transportation.

Covering the Cost of Transportation

Transportation costs can impose a significant burden on programs. For example, Kentucky, which requires districts to provide transportation, noted that many districts found transportation more expensive than the cost of operating the prekindergarten class itself. Transportation for prekindergarten children is particularly expensive because the state requires that monitors be present when young children are on the school bus. This is important to ensure the children's safety, but the state does not provide prekindergarten programs with adequate funding to cover basic transportation costs, much less this additional expense.

States may help local programs cover the cost of transportation in several ways, either by using a portion of the state prekindergarten funds to cover the expense, working to coordinate transportation with other programs such as Head Start, or reimbursing local school districts for the costs through state transportation aid.

Four states provide programs with additional funds through the prekindergarten initiative itself to cover transportation costs:

"Having transportation really helps. You want to help your kids but when you have a job and have to work and get food on the table, education comes second. Having a bus that picks them up every day is great."
—Minnesota parent

- Georgia pays for transportation of at-risk children. (Districts or programs may offer transportation for other children at their own expense.)
- In Illinois, programs may request funds to cover transportation needs.
- One of the primary uses of New Hampshire's Head Start state funds is the maintenance of the program's transportation system.
- In Washington, some programs include transportation costs in their budget, so that it is considered when negotiating the cost per child covered by the prekindergarten initiative.

The school district's transportation funds are used to cover the cost of transportation for prekindergarten programs in 14 states (Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, New Jersey,[107] Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin). In at least eight of these states (Florida, Kansas, Maryland, New Jersey, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, and Wisconsin), this means that the state is contributing to the transportation costs, since the state reimburses the local districts for a portion of transportation expenses.

In some states, programs may find it more difficult to cover transportation expenses. For example, two states indicated that they set policies explicitly limiting how programs can fund transportation. These same policies may be used by other states.

- Missouri does not allow programs to use any of the prekindergarten funds they receive from the state for transportation. Local programs that provide transportation must support it with their own funds.
- New York does not provide separate transportation aid for its Universal Prekindergarten programs. Programs are permitted to transport prekindergarten children using school buses supported with state public school transportation aid, but only if there are spaces on the buses that are not already filled; schools cannot use state transportation aid to expand upon existing transportation resources for the purpose of serving prekindergarten children.

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Providing Programs in Children's Home Language

Children who speak languages other than English should have the opportunity to participate in prekindergarten experiences that will help prepare them to enter school. This is particularly important since these children constitute a growing proportion of the United States population—and a growing proportion of the future workforce. The U.S. Department of Education reports that the number of kindergarten through 12th grade students with limited English proficiency has doubled in less than a decade, to over 3.5 million in 1996–97 (7.4 percent of total student enrollment in public and private schools).[178]

With increasing numbers of children coming from families whose primary language is other than English, education systems must be accessible and sensitive to the needs of these families and children. Children whose primary language is other than English are at greater risk of educational failure, and their parents face far greater barriers to being involved in their child's education than other parents. Poverty further compounds these problems for many children and their families. Yet schools are generally ill-equipped to meet their needs.

Reaching these children and their families during the prekindergarten years can prevent later problems in school, help children retain their home language while learning English, and encourage a positive relationship between the family and the education system. In addition, these families may be quite isolated and can benefit enormously from state prekindergarten initiatives that work actively to connect them with important supports such as health care and social services.

Programs can meet the needs of children and families whose primary language is other than English through efforts such as translating their materials into the family's language, hiring staff that speak the language of the children

and parents, and providing instruction in both English and the child's native language. By taking these steps, programs can help children feel more secure and ease their transition to school, involve parents who do not speak English in their children's education, enable children to use their native language in gaining a first grasp of complicated concepts, help children retain their native language, and encourage the development of strong language skills that children can apply in learning English.[103]

States can support programs' efforts to address the needs of children and families whose primary language is other than English by establishing specific policies and by providing fiscal and technical support. A number of states have taken such steps—for example, they have requirements for programs to meet these needs, provide resources to support language instruction, and/or target their eligibility criteria to ensure children who speak languages other than English have an opportunity to participate in prekindergarten. However, some states make little if any attempt to ensure that programs are accessible and responsive to these children and their families. The extent of state efforts to meet children's language needs will depend in part on the degree to which such needs exist—whether the state has a large population of families who speak languages other than English—and in part on the state's commitment to providing access for all families.

Requirements to Meet Children's Language Needs

Despite the importance of these issues, many states do not have any specific requirements concerning assistance for children whose primary language is other than English. However, there are some state initiatives with relatively strong provisions addressing the needs of this group:

- All state-funded Head Start models are subject to Head Start Performance Standards, which include provisions addressing children's language needs. The standards require that, when the majority of children served in a program speak the same language, at least one classroom staff member or home visitor regularly interacting with the children must speak their language. This requirement applies to the state-funded Head Start models in Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Kansas, Massachusetts, Maine, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington, and Wisconsin. The requirement is also followed by Ohio's Public School Preschool initiative, which has adopted Head Start Performance Standards.

Many states do not require programs to make efforts to meet the needs of children whose primary language is other than English.

- Kansas requires programs to indicate in their grant application how they will address the needs of children who do not speak English. Programs must be offered in the child's home or first language. In areas of the state where there are significant numbers of families who do not speak English, programs will make targeted efforts to recruit these families.

- In Minnesota, programs must meet the needs of children and families who do not speak English by providing interpreters, adopting bilingual programming, using outreach strategies, and other means.

- Nebraska requires that someone in the classroom speak the native language of the children. Although not specifically required, the state's programs make other efforts such as providing home visitors who speak the parent's language and translated written materials.

- New York's Universal Prekindergarten initiative requires that if a class has a certain number of children with limited English proficiency, there must be a certified bilingual teacher. The state has not yet defined what this "certain" number is.

- Texas requires districts to provide bilingual and English as a second language (ESL) classes.

- In Washington, programs must provide materials in the family's language and hire staff who are able to communicate with the children and family. The state is currently strengthening requirements to ensure that the staff reflect the cultural and linguistic makeup of the community served.

A few additional states have established requirements addressing the needs of children whose primary language is other than English, but these requirements are too limited in scope to ensure that children have access to the language instruction they need. For example:

- Colorado requires program staff to have knowledge of multicultural education, but does not require that they be bilingual.

- Florida requires all prekindergarten teachers to have 18 hours of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) training, but does not require bilingual staff.

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Failure to Address Children's Language Needs

Many state initiatives (28) do not require programs to make efforts to meet the needs of children whose primary language is other than English, but instead leave it to local programs to determine how and whether they will address these needs (Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin).

A number of these states (13) indicated that, despite the lack of requirements, local programs are generally making sufficient efforts to meet the language needs of the communities they serve (Alabama, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, New Mexico, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and Wisconsin). Activities undertaken by programs typically include hiring diverse staff, providing training, and translating written materials into the family's language.

Resources to Support Language Instruction

Several states provide targeted support for language instruction, either through funding for their prekindergarten initiative itself or separate funding sources. Such efforts are extremely important in enabling local programs to meet the needs of children and families whose primary language is other than English. For example:

- In the District of Columbia, prekindergarten children are provided with access to any resources for language instruction that are available at the public schools they attend.
- Maryland allows school districts to use a portion of their SAFE funds (new education funds) to provide bilingual education.
- Minnesota sets aside 11 percent of its state Head Start funds for competitive grants, some of which are used for translation and literacy activities such as translating Head Start forms into multiple languages.
- Under a recent legislative change, Oklahoma now counts four-year-olds who are served by the state's prekindergarten initiative (in addition to K–12 students) and who qualify for the English-As-A-Second-Language

(ESL) program when determining the total amount of funding for bilingual education a school district will receive.

- Oklahoma's state-appropriated funds for its Head Start model have helped enable programs to hire bilingual staff (and in one case, to provide interpretation and sign language for a deaf child).
- Through a family literacy initiative, South Carolina's programs work with families to help meet their language needs.

Setting Eligibility Criteria That Promote Access

Besides establishing requirements or providing funding for language instruction, states use other strategies to increase access to their prekindergarten initiatives for children whose primary language is other than English or who have language deficiencies. These children are eligible or receive priority for participation in 10 initiatives (Arkansas, Colorado, Hawaii, Kansas, Maryland, Nebraska, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont, and Washington).[110]

Additional states have eligibility criteria that may indirectly lead programs to serve large numbers of children whose primary language is other than English. For example, in states that allow local communities flexibility in determining eligibility criteria, a community with a large population of children who do not speak English may choose to give priority to this group. States that use a screening instrument to determine which children are most educationally disadvantaged may also be likely to identify children who do not speak English as having a need for a prekindergarten experience.

Data on Access to Language Instruction

Several states were able to provide data on the percentage of children enrolled in their prekindergarten initiatives who are receiving instruction in their home language. These data reveal tremendous variations in the extent of the need for language instruction in each state, which is partially related to the percentage of the state's overall population that do not speak English as their primary language, and the extent to which it is provided.

- In Arkansas, about 1 to 2 percent of those participating in the prekindergarten initiative were receiving bilingual instruction.

- In Connecticut, at least 20 percent of children received native language instruction.
- In Delaware, a little over half of the children were receiving bilingual education.
- In Nebraska, about one-quarter of the children received native language instruction or were served in bilingual settings.
- In Oregon, about half the children were receiving native language instruction or were served in bilingual settings.
- In Vermont, less than 1 percent of the children received native language instruction or were served in bilingual settings.

Providing Access to Children with Disabilities and Other Special Needs

Children with disabilities and other special needs benefit greatly from early intervention. Research shows that providing supports to children with disabilities and other special needs in their early years reduces their need for special education and other supports later in life.[111] Prekindergarten programs also benefit the parents of children with disabilities and other special needs by giving parents opportunities to learn how they can best support their children and work effectively with school systems to ensure that they are responsive to their children's needs.

It is important to all children that prekindergarten programs provide access to children with disabilities and other special needs.[112] Inclusive programs benefit children with disabilities and other special needs by allowing them to learn from their peers. They also teach all children the values of interdependence and acceptance of human differences.

In addition to being accessible for children with disabilities and special needs, it is also important that programs provide the children with any extra educational, health, nutritional, and other developmental supports they need. In this way, children's special needs can be addressed starting at an early age, giving them the opportunity to reach their full potential. By providing supplementary resources, such as additional therapists, social workers, and other staff, to meet children's special needs, programs can also boost the quality of the prekindergarten experience for all children.

States can help prekindergarten programs identify and fully address children's special needs by setting clear policies on what programs are expected to provide and by offering fiscal and technical assistance. They can also support these efforts by using resources made available to them through a federal grant program

"This year there were two Downs Syndrome children who were in different prekindergarten classes. Neither child was verbal at the beginning of the year. By the end of the year, both children had become outgoing, were loved by their classmates, and had become very verbal. Being in the language-rich and social environment of a prekindergarten class was exactly what each child needed."

—Georgia Prekindergarten Regional Consultant

established under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The act was amended in 1986 to ensure that all states provide free appropriate public education to children ages three to five with special needs, and the grant program is intended to help states meet this goal. In 1998, states received $374 million in federal funds and served 572,000 children through this grant program.[113] By coordinating their prekindergarten initiatives with these federal resources, as well as other federal, state and local resources, states can more effectively and efficiently provide inclusive, comprehensive prekindergarten programs for all children.

This chapter examines the various ways in which states are ensuring that their prekindergarten initiatives provide access to children with disabilities and other special needs and address their comprehensive needs.[114] Many states design their eligibility criteria so that these children are provided with ample opportunities to participate in prekindergarten, coordinate their initiatives with other programs and resources, and/or offer teacher training on working with these children.

Targeted Eligibility Criteria

A number of state prekindergarten initiatives explicitly mention children with disabilities and other special needs when defining their eligibility criteria. For example:

- Kentucky's initiative requires districts to make prekindergarten available to all children ages three and four with developmental delays or disabilities, regardless of family income.
- Under the Head Start Performance Standards followed by state-funded Head Start models, at least 10 percent of the children served by programs must be children with disabilities and other special needs (Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington, and Wisconsin).

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- Several states list special needs status or eligibility for special education among the at-risk criteria that allow children to qualify or receive priority for participation in prekindergarten. These states include Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Missouri, Vermont, and Washington. Other states or individual programs funded by state prekindergarten initiatives may adopt similar policies.

- A few states indicated that their prekindergarten initiatives give priority to children who have special needs but do not qualify to have their participation in an early education program covered by the federal special education grants program. States with such eligibility policies include Kansas, Louisiana, and Minnesota.

Coordinating Resources

In addition to giving children with disabilities and other special needs priority for participation in state prekindergarten initiatives, states use several other strategies to address these children's needs. For example, they may combine federal funding with state prekindergarten funding and/or use federal funding to place children with disabilities and other special needs in a classroom otherwise funded by the state prekindergarten initiative. Such approaches allow these children the opportunity to participate in prekindergarten programs that are inclusive and have resources to offer additional supports.

- Several states support the placement of a child with special needs in a prekindergarten class through a combination of state prekindergarten and special education funding. States that take this approach include Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin.

- Some states specified that they provide prekindergarten supports for children with disabilities and other special needs by using multiple funding sources, but that each of the funding sources is designated for a distinct purpose (Arkansas, Delaware, Illinois, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Texas). These states will generally use state prekindergarten funds to cover the cost of the children's participation in the basic program, while using special education funds to pay for any supplemental supports—such as speech therapy.

- In Texas, half-day programs for children with special needs can be funded through the state prekindergarten initiative, and funding for the remaining half-day can be provided by the Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities.

"Last year, we started adding students without any delays. It's been very helpful. They learn from each other. If we had the physical space, we could add another teacher and fill up another classroom."
—Oklahoma teacher

- In some states, although children with disabilities and other special needs are served in the same classrooms with children who are funded through the state prekindergarten initiative, their participation is funded entirely through special education funds. This approach was mentioned by Arizona, Iowa, Kansas, Ohio, and Virginia.

- Arizona indicated that it uses state prekindergarten funds to place typically developing children in special education-funded classrooms to act as peer models.

- A few states—including California and Georgia—indicated that, while they do not allow funding streams to intersect, they require their programs to be inclusive.

Strategies for Promoting Effective Collaboration

By coordinating resources, states can ensure that children with disabilities and other special needs have the opportunity to participate in inclusive programs that meet their full range of needs. Every state has a State Interagency Coordination Council to facilitate coordination of early childhood programs for these children with other programs and resources. Several states discussed how effective these and other collaboration efforts have been specifically in relation to their prekindergarten initiatives.

- Several states indicated that state-level agencies are working together to align policies for various programs serving children with disabilities and other special needs, including state prekindergarten initiatives. State-level collaboration efforts may be made through teams or workgroups as in Iowa, interagency councils as in Michigan and New Mexico, or on a more informal basis as in Maryland.

- Some state prekindergarten initiatives provide opportunities for collaboration at the local level. For example, Colorado includes representation of the special education community on district councils and requires that each local program address the issue of inclusion in its application for funding. Other states may have similar policies.

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Supporting Collaboration to Serve Children in Head Start

Some states support collaborative efforts to serve children with disabilities and other special needs by targeting a portion of their state Head Start funds for this purpose. Efforts such as these are particularly important given that Head Start programs are required to have children with disabilities and other special needs comprise at least 10 percent of their enrollment. For example:

- Minnesota sets aside a portion of funding for the state Head Start model for innovative projects. In the last funding cycle, one of the projects was a collaboration between Head Start and Early Childhood Special Education, which provides programs through school districts for children with disabilities and other special needs.
- Ohio uses some of its state Head Start funds to provide grants to the 16 Special Education Regional Resource Centers to help coordinate activities for young children with disabilities and other special needs.
- In Oklahoma, one program uses state Head Start funds to help families manage the transition from the Early Intervention program (which serves young children with disabilities and other special needs) into Head Start. The program works with the families in various ways, including through home-based transition activities.

Training Prekindergarten Teachers

Several states offer training opportunities that can help prekindergarten teachers strengthen their ability to serve children with disabilities and other special needs. Training can also help teachers overcome their own stereotypes and fears about disabilities and address similar perceptions among parents and children in their programs.

- Florida provides staff training on inclusion to ensure that prekindergarten teachers are prepared to work with children in an integrated classroom.
- In New Mexico, the Office of Child Development, which administers the prekindergarten initiative, receives funds from the Health Department and the Education Department to offer training and professional development on serving children with disabilities and other special needs.

- Wisconsin recently brought together the pre-service teaching requirements for special education and general education into one certification, so that some teachers may become certified in both areas.
- Some states offer joint training for prekindergarten teachers that include providers serving children with disabilities and other special needs. These trainings can make it easier for programs to work together by providing prekindergarten teachers in special education and other classrooms with a common knowledge base. States that indicated they provide joint trainings include Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

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Establishing Fee Policies That Ensure the Accessibility of Prekindergarten

The early learning experiences provided by prekindergarten are intimately connected to children's ability to be ready to read and succeed in school. Given this strong connection between prekindergarten and children's subsequent education, it is logical for prekindergarten programs to adopt the same principle inherent in public education—that programs be free of charge. This maximizes access for all families.

Although prekindergarten initiatives generally provide prekindergarten at no cost to families, five state initiatives charge fees for the core program. In addition, several states charge fees under certain circumstances, such as when programs open up to families who do not meet the eligibility criteria, offer special activities, or provide extended hours.

Fees for the Core Program Can Limit Access

While most states do not charge parents a fee for the core prekindergarten program, five state initiatives permit or require a parent fee.

- Parents earning over 100 percent of poverty who participate in Hawaii's Preschool Open Doors Project are charged based on a sliding fee scale. In addition, some programs may ask parents to make up the difference between the rates they charge (typically $375 to $400 a month) and the amount the state provides to each parent to purchase a slot in a program ($350 a month), if the program cannot cover the shortfall through other means.
- Sliding fee scales are used by Massachusetts' Community Partnerships for Children program.

Most states do not charge a fee for the core prekindergarten program.

- Fees are used by some districts in Minnesota for Learning Readiness programs. Fees are generally only charged for regular prekindergarten classes, and not for other supports for children and families (such as home visits and supplementary services) funded by the initiative.
- Missouri's new prekindergarten initiative allows districts to charge parents fees on a sliding scale basis.
- Fees are charged to families earning over 100 percent of poverty who participate in Ohio's Public School Preschool initiative.

Fees for Families Who Are Otherwise Ineligible

In addition to states that charge fees to eligible families, a few states—Connecticut, Kentucky, Nebraska, and Texas—charge fees to families who would not qualify for the prekindergarten initiative under the eligibility criteria but who are permitted to participate under special circumstances. (For example, a program may allow non-eligible families to participate because otherwise there would not be a sufficient number of students to support a class. This situation might arise in a smaller district.) These fees may be based on a sliding scale, as is typically the case in Connecticut and Nebraska, or may be set at the market rate for the full cost of the program, as is the case for some programs in Kentucky. While these states may intend to use fees to open up their programs to families beyond those generally eligible for prekindergarten, the fees may have the opposite effect, discouraging families from participating.

Minimal Fees for Certain Activities

In some states, programs may charge a small fee to cover specific purposes. For example:

- Georgia allows programs to charge parents of children who are not at risk a fee to cover meals. This fee is relatively minimal—about $10 to $15 a week.
- Kansas and Wisconsin mentioned that some districts charge a small activity fee for field trips and other purposes.

Fees for Extended-Day Programs

States that offer a full-day alternative, either through the prekindergarten initiative itself or through coordination with other sources such as federal or state child care funds, generally charge fees for the extended day. Connecticut's School Readiness initiative, which requires programs to offer extended hours, also requires programs to charge a fee for additional hours. Such fees can make it easier to coordinate prekindergarten with state child care programs providing assistance for low-income families, which have always charged parents a fee based on a sliding scale. However, it is important that any fees be kept to a minimum so that they do not discourage low- and moderate-income families from utilizing the extended hours. Experts believe that families should be expected to pay no more than 10 percent of their income for early care and education and that families in poverty should not be charged any fees.

PART V

Integrating Prekindergarten Initiatives with Other Early Childhood Programs

Each day, a lack of resources for early education and care and fragmentation in the delivery of early childhood services make it challenging for families to find and access the supports they need. Many states have begun to use their prekindergarten program to help address these issues through coordination and collaboration with other early childhood resources.

A number of state initiatives encourage and support coordination at the community and program level. Innovative strategies have been adopted, bringing together new and different partners to improve the quality of programs and make early education affordable, accessible, and available to all children in a community.

At the state level, many prekindergarten initiatives are designed to model the best aspects of collaboration, through interagency collaboration, early childhood councils that bring together representatives of many and varied agencies serving young children and their families, and coordination of resources to stretch them as far as possible.

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This section focuses on the different approaches states have taken to adopt the final section of the blueprint: integrating prekindergarten initiatives with other early childhood programs. Chapters in this part include:

- Collaboration at the Community Level
- Collaboration at the State Level

Collaboration at the Community Level

Currently, public funds for early childhood are used to support varied approaches, each of which may focus on only one of the multiple goals involved in meeting the needs of children and families. Some low-income parents receive child care assistance to help them work or become self-sufficient, yet child care policies and funding levels often do not support the quality of care, much less the comprehensive services, that children need. Other children participate in part-time, education-focused programs to help them get ready for school, while still others receive the part-time (though comprehensive) early childhood services of Head Start which are designed to help children overcome the disadvantages of poverty. Many families receive nothing at all, despite sharing the need for a comprehensive, good quality early childhood education program that is affordable and accessible for parents who work full time or want to work.

Because these gaps primarily result from inadequate investments in children and families, they cannot be fully addressed without additional resources. However, many policymakers are attempting to maximize the impact of existing funds by addressing the fragmentation that characterizes much of the early childhood system. These collaborative efforts are rooted at the community level, where prekindergarten programs operate and where the families they serve live, work, and raise their children. Communities are given increased opportunities to make decisions about how to better support children and families. Within each community, people representing a variety of programs and sectors assess what resources children and families need, what resources are available in their own community, and what new resources are necessary.

Collaborative efforts are rooted at the community level, where prekindergarten programs operate and where the families they serve live, work, and raise their children.

Local planning can be extremely challenging, as it requires communities to balance competing goals and interests and reconcile differences among various programs' policies and practices. However, states can help communities overcome these challenges by:

- Incorporating requirements for local planning directly in their prekindergarten statutes.
- Establishing clear guidelines on what groups and interests should be represented on local planning councils, what responsibilities the councils should have, and what the goals of the planning process should be, among other important elements.
- Supporting staff for local collaborative efforts.
- Offering training and technical assistance to help local communities deal with obstacles to collaboration and sharing successful strategies for local collaboration with communities across the state.
- Providing financial resources to address gaps identified by local planning efforts.

At least 23 states require some form of local collaboration in their prekindergarten initiatives (Alabama, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington). Several additional states have strategies to encourage local collaboration.

States may require or encourage local collaboration for specific purposes, such as sharing trainings or other resources or coordinating programs to offer full-day care. However, this chapter focuses on states' efforts to promote broader community planning. It examines efforts directly tied to prekindergarten initiatives as well as efforts that include prekindergarten but do not stem from the prekindergarten initiative itself.

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Promoting Local Collaborative Planning

A number of state prekindergarten initiatives require and/or provide financial and technical resources for community planning. A local planning process serves as an opportunity for various members of the community, such as parents, teachers, child care providers, social services workers, health care providers, business representatives, community leaders, and other groups and individuals, to come together to determine how their resources can be used to most effectively.

- An advisory council or team is required in each community receiving state prekindergarten funds in 11 states (Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New York [for its Universal Prekindergarten], Ohio, and Virginia). The council generally has to include parents and representatives from various local agencies (such as Health Departments, Head Start, or the local child care office) and is expected to come up with a plan for providing comprehensive services.
- Alabama, Nebraska, New Mexico, and Vermont require that projects funded by their initiatives be collaboratively developed at the community level.
- Delaware requires that all of its prekindergarten programs have written agreements with other community programs concerning areas such as sharing resources, joint staff development, referral and recruitment, identification of children with disabilities and other special needs, and transportation.
- Kentucky requires that school districts planning prekindergarten programs work with other local community prekindergarten and child care programs to avoid duplication or supplantation of federal funds. Each of the local districts is required to have an agreement with Head Start to address the full utilization of resources. Districts must also coordinate with local health, mental health, and social services agencies.
- Maryland requires that each participating school system submit a comprehensive plan addressing the use of state prekindergarten, Title I, state compensatory education, Limited English Proficiency, teacher development, and other funds.
- Minnesota uses a portion of the funds it sets aside for innovative projects (11 percent of its state Head Start funds) to support local collaboration efforts.
- Oklahoma funds nine community planning grants (at $5,000 each) to enable localities to examine the range of early care and education resources they have available and determine how to use them most effectively.

A Closer Look at Strong Local Planning Strategies

Two states—Connecticut and Massachusetts—have incorporated strong requirements for local planning directly into their prekindergarten initiatives. (North Carolina's Smart Start initiative, which takes a particularly broad-based community planning approach to providing early childhood supports, is discussed in a separate box at the end of this section.) Local collaboration efforts in these states highlight the innovative strategies that communities are using to bring together disparate groups and interests for the common purpose of helping children and families.

Connecticut School Readiness Councils

Connecticut's School Readiness initiative requires that each community receiving funds establish a council to provide advice on how to use the funds and to develop a five-year plan for the community. The state requires that council membership be appointed by the mayor and the superintendent of schools and include the chief elected official and the superintendent (or their designees), parents, representatives of early childhood programs, a public librarian, and other local community organizations working with young children. Other members of the council may include the housing commissioner, training coordinators for local welfare-to-work programs, local elected officials, Head Start representatives, special education and kindergarten teachers, and other community leaders. In many communities, local early childhood providers meet separately on a regular basis, and then designate a representative to participate on the council.

Members of the council serve on a volunteer basis, while a paid staff person is hired to report to the council on the day-to-day operations of programs. The staff person's responsibilities include monitoring the implementation of prekindergarten programs, helping children access programs, and answering providers' questions.

Councils are also responsible for ensuring that programs funded through the School Readiness Initiative provide all 10 quality components in order to meet children's full range of needs. These components cover such areas as health, nutrition, family literacy, parent involvement, and program evaluation. In addition, councils are responsible for overseeing program accreditation and inclusion of children with special needs.

The specific ways in which councils choose to carry out their responsibilities vary from community to community: local councils may monitor prekindergarten programs, review and approve proposals by prospective subgrantees,

develop policies, and/or work with providers on improving quality. Community councils are making important decisions that affect the quality, comprehensiveness, and availability of early childhood programs. For example, some communities have decided that, to meet the needs of working parents, all programs will operate on a full-day/full-year basis. Some communities require that all center-based programs receive accreditation from NAEYC. (This requirement is more rigorous than the state's, which mandates that programs work toward accreditation, but permits one of several accreditation options.[113]) Other communities have made a commitment to building facilities.

Time and experience has enabled councils to build stronger working relationships among their members and to become more effective. Many councils are beginning to focus more on long-term plans for building the supply of early education programs and improving their quality.

Massachusetts' Community Partnerships for Children

Communities participating in Massachusetts' prekindergarten initiative are required to form governing councils. The councils are responsible for supervising their community needs assessment, developing a plan for using funds, and monitoring the program's progress. They have flexibility in how to use the funds, provided that they meet the five objectives of the initiative—increasing the availability and affordability of early childhood programs (particularly for working families), encouraging collaboration, providing comprehensive services, enhancing quality, and conducting community outreach so that all families have access to programs.

Council membership must include two parents, a principal, a teacher, early childhood providers, Head Start, and child care resource and referral agencies. The state also recommends that councils include social services workers, medical professionals, family child care providers, additional parents, and members of the business community. Some councils have local elected officials, librarians, police, or firefighters as well. Council membership is generally open to anyone who wishes to join, but the state asks the councils to balance representation among child care, Head Start, and public school programs. Several councils have developed by-laws specifying who may participate, how long a term on the council may last, and/or who has voting privileges.

The state provides technical assistance to foster successful collaboration. A manual offers communities guidance on establishing and maintaining councils. The state also provides training in facilitation, negotiation, and other collaborative skills. To the extent possible, staff from the state agency

are available to attend local council meetings. Guidelines from the state help councils work through specific issues that present difficulties, such as differences in rates among programs. The state also refers councils that are newly established, or that are experiencing difficulties, to successful councils for assistance. Technical assistance is provided through regional community partnership fairs as well.

Community councils support one another through network meetings of community partnerships coordinators. While the network is maintained by the local councils, the state agency provides funds for presenters and agency staff to attend the meetings to provide assistance and learn from the council members.

Successful councils have been able to coordinate programs for greater efficiency and to serve as an organizing force in the community for helping families, oftentimes referring families to various agencies, including social services, health care, and parent support groups. Several councils have been particularly effective. The Attleboro program has had great success in encouraging widespread community involvement in its council, with the council growing from 10 members to over 100. This tremendous increase in membership was partially due to efforts to make meetings more convenient and enjoyable. The council decided to hold monthly pizza meetings that serve both business and social purposes, with child care provided. The council has managed to retain interest by focusing on concrete tasks, such as setting up a conference. The council's efforts have yielded several positive results: joint trainings on accreditation, cooperation among providers in referring families to programs and helping them find a placement for their children, and better positioning to compete for grants from other sources.

Boston has had similar success in its collaborative efforts. The city's council, which addresses the needs of children from birth to age eight, has over 100 members, with an umbrella council overseeing nine neighborhood clusters. Boston's council determined that one of the city's primary needs was more early childhood facilities. The council has assisted the state in elaborating and improving its policies for facility construction and renovation.

In Northampton, council members are looking at the full range of programs available and trying to develop a plan that will involve all types of programs and providers. The council offers community-wide joint trainings for providers and holds workshops at night for parents and children. It has hired a behavioral consultant who rotates among programs, working with children and training staff. The council is considering hiring a speech therapist as well. Many councils are using similar strategies to achieve the goals of the state's prekindergarten initiative.

North Carolina: Smart Start

North Carolina's Smart Start is a comprehensive early childhood initiative that allows communities to develop plans for meeting the needs of children birth to age five and their families. The initiative was launched in 1993 as an effort to help ensure that children enter school healthy and ready to succeed and has now expanded to cover all of the state's 100 counties. In 1998–99, state spending on Smart Start was $140 million. The initiative is also supported by cash and in-kind contributions from the private sector. These contributions totaled over $13 million in 1998.

Local partnerships—consisting of one or more counties—are given responsibility for determining how to use the community's Smart Start funds. Communities assess what gaps exist in their early childhood programs and determine how to target their funds accordingly. Funds may be used for a variety of purposes, including direct child care subsidies, improving the quality of child care and early education, teacher education and support, health care and dental care for children, and parent education and support. There are certain constraints on how local communities spend the funds; at least 30 percent of funding must be used for child care subsidies and at least 70 percent for early care and education. Local plans must also have measurable outcomes for each activity supported by Smart Start funds.

The membership of local partnership boards of directors must consist of representatives of public and private non-profit health and human service agencies, child care providers, the business community, foundations, county and municipal governments, local education units, and families. With their diverse membership, local partnerships are able to represent a wide array of organizations and interests.

The North Carolina Partnership for Children provides statewide oversight and support for local partnerships. The NC Partnership serves as the initiative's fiscal agent, reviews local plans, manages contracts, monitors for compliance, provides technical assistance to local partnerships, and helps with fundraising to meet the matching requirements for state funds.

Smart Start Successes

Smart Start has had many notable impacts on the availability, quality, and accessibility of early care and education across the state.[116] Counties have used Smart Start funds to promote the well-being of young children in many ways, including:

- Helping prepare children for school. For example, according to studies in Orange and Mecklenberg Counties, children who received Smart Start supports scored higher on kindergarten tests assessing their readiness for school.
- Improving quality in early childhood programs. The number of top quality child care centers has increased by more than 60 percent in Smart Start counties. In Rutherford County, the number of AA-licensed centers (the highest state rating) has increased from none prior to Smart Start to 12.

- Supporting teacher education and training. Before Smart Start, only 5 percent of early care and education teachers and professionals in Ashe County had their North Carolina early childhood credentials. Now, as a result of Smart Start and T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) grants, all teachers and providers in the county have completed their training and have a credential.

- Providing preventive health care. In Cumberland County, more than 5,000 children have received vision, dental, and hearing screenings at child care centers where they may not have gotten them otherwise. In addition, nurses visit child care centers to provide screenings so that parents do not have to leave work to take their children to a separate location for screening. In Jones County, which had no pediatrician prior to Smart Start, children are now served by a physician through the Health Department, and all prekindergarten children in the county have had their hearing screened.

- Offering parent education and support. Through a collaborative effort among Smart Start, Health Check, First Step, Health Choice, and AT&T, a toll-free line is available to help parents connect with their local Smart Start partnership and other family services. The line is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and has Spanish-speaking operators available. In Wilkes County, agencies are coordinating their programs to increase the availability and accessibility of family supports. Parent support groups have served more than 400 parents and family literacy has helped more than 800 children and families learn to read together since 1995. There are also three new Family Resource Centers providing comprehensive services, including adult education, free transportation, and child care.

- Making early childhood programs more accessible for families who do not speak English. Chatham County has used Smart Start funds to support a number of resources for Spanish-speaking families, including training sessions and materials on basic child care, health and safety, and early childhood development. In its efforts to help these families, the county's Smart Start partnership has collaborated with the local Cooperative Extension agency, the local community college, Head Start, the United Way, and the Helping Hands Center.

- Making programs more accessible for children with disabilities and other special needs. An evaluation of the first 12 partnerships found that after the introduction of Smart Start, the number of centers serving children with disabilities increased. In addition, directors reported more resources and supports available for staff who serve children with disabilities.[117] Communities may target some of their funds specifically for projects serving children with disabilities and other special needs. For example, Cumberland County supports an early intervention team to work with children with behavioral and emotional problems and to provide training and education to parents and professionals working with young children; a program providing parent education on effectively caring for and advocating for the needs of their children and offering education and consultation for providers; and a special needs education center providing assistance to families of children with disabilities and other special needs.[118]

Broader Local Planning Efforts

Some states foster local planning efforts not as an integral part of the prekindergarten initiative itself, but rather through a separate initiative designed to bring together early childhood programs and resources, including prekindergarten programs. Three states—Colorado, Florida, and Iowa—have adopted this strategy to promote closer coordination. While these efforts were not incorporated in their initial state prekindergarten initiatives, over time they could significantly impact the availability and quality of prekindergarten programs as well as other services for children and families.

The collaboration initiatives attempt to encourage greater local input and flexibility through a local planning process that also allows communities to seek waivers from various program requirements. A local planning process is an effective tool in helping communities to identify and address gaps in their early childhood programs. Yet, waiver authority alone does not necessarily help programs fill these gaps, and has the potential to result in lower quality programs if communities are not also provided with additional resources. Unfortunately, Colorado and Florida have not as yet included any new funds in their local planning initiatives to enable communities to meet the needs that planning efforts reveal.

Efforts to encourage local input should also continue to be accompanied by state guidelines for quality prekindergarten programs. It is essential to ensure that all prekindergarten programs have the core components necessary to provide quality early education experiences that prepare children for school.

Colorado

Colorado's Consolidated Child Care project is a pilot program operating in 12 communities. These communities are encouraged to combine prekindergarten and child care funds to provide full-day comprehensive care for children ages birth to five. The project is intended to give communities an opportunity to examine what resources are available for early childhood programs, identify existing gaps, and determine what more is needed to provide quality child care and education. The 12 pilot communities are allowed to request waivers of existing requirements so they can use prekindergarten dollars to serve infants and toddlers or coordinate resources in other ways. The state plans to extend this pilot to an additional six communities next year.

Florida

In 1999, Florida enacted School Readiness legislation emphasizing local collaboration and greater coordination of resources at the state and local level. Local coalitions will be responsible for developing plans for using various funding streams—including Prekindergarten Early Intervention, Head Start, public and private child care programs, prekindergarten programs serving children with disabilities and other special needs, programs for migrant children, Title I, child care subsidies, and teen parent programs—to ensure that children enter school ready to learn. These coalitions can request that the state waive any rules governing individual programs, such as the prekindergarten initiative or the child care assistance program, if they believe it is necessary for the implementation of the community's school readiness plan. Coalitions that are approved by January 1, 2000 are eligible for a $50,000 initiation grant to assist with local planning efforts, and those that are approved by March 1, 2000 are eligible for a $25,000 initiation grant.

A state-level Partnership is responsible for overseeing the initiative. It includes the Lieutenant Governor or his or her designee, the Commissioner of Education, the Secretary of the Department of Children and Families, the Chair of the Child Care Executive Partnership Board, the Chair of the WAGES (welfare-to-work) Program State Board of Directors, and 10 members appointed by the Governor, eight of whom must be chosen from a list of nominees submitted by the state legislature. By February 1, 2000, the Partnership must make recommendations on combining funding streams into a School Readiness Trust Fund. By July 1, 2000, the Partnership must develop a system for assessing the effectiveness of school readiness programs in preparing children for school.

Iowa

In 1998, Iowa established the Community Empowerment Areas Initiative, a statewide, community-based early childhood effort.[119] This community planning initiative includes funding for School Readiness Grants ($5.2 million) and child care subsidies ($3.8 million).

To participate in Iowa's local planning initiative, communities must create a community development board with majority representation of citizens and elected officials, and at least one recipient of public services. The board can create a professional advisory council and may also designate representatives from provider agencies to offer technical assistance. Once this board has con-

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ducted an assessment of family needs in the community, it can apply for state funding. The application must show proof of a collaborative planning process and must identify projected outcomes for children and families.

Community Empowerment Area funds can be used to finance a range of projects including prekindergarten programs, prenatal programs, parent education classes, full-day Head Start programs, or other programs that help children enter school ready to learn. At a minimum, local boards must provide voluntary prekindergarten to at-risk children, offer parent support and education programs for parents of children from birth to age five, and develop a School Readiness plan. The plan should address child development services, child care provider training, children's health and safety supports, identification and assistance for chemically exposed infants and children, and parent support and education.

An 11-member state Empowerment Board oversees local funding decisions. This board is comprised of eight citizens appointed by the governor and the directors of the state Department of Education, Department of Human Services, and Department of Public Health. The board is responsible for identifying core indicators of performance to assess the effectiveness of grants; establishing guidelines and a process to determine if Community Empowerment Areas are ready to administer School Readiness Grants; and providing technical assistance on funding, program design, and other areas. The state board is also responsible for handling local requests for waivers of state and federal rules; developing recommendations regarding amendments to state law; seeking federal waivers; redirecting existing public and private funding; and reducing redundancy and overlap in the work of existing boards, commissions, and committees.

Collaboration at the State Level

States can take a leadership role in encouraging collaboration that extends from the state to the community to the individual program level. Collaboration at the state level creates a framework for local communities as well as a model for them to emulate. Interagency coordination at the state level can range from joint planning efforts in the initial stages of developing a prekindergarten initiative, to sharing of information about the children and families the various agencies serve and the programs they fund, to joint sponsoring of trainings or conferences, to joint funding for comprehensive services, to interagency councils for addressing ongoing concerns.

More than three out of four states with prekindergarten initiatives indicated that they have some type of state-level efforts to coordinate their prekindergarten initiatives with other early childhood programs (Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin).

Collaboration on the Grant Proposal Process

In some states, multiple state-level agencies collaborate in designing the application form that local programs use to apply for funds and/or in reviewing proposals once they are submitted. Collaboration at this early stage offers a valuable opportunity to address coordination issues up-front to avoid potential conflicts. It enables states to design an application process that gives various types of programs the opportunity to participate, allows them to verify

that the early childhood programs they approve for funding are high quality, and ensures that local plans for providing prekindergarten and other early childhood supports address the full range of needs of children and families.

- In Connecticut, the Department of Education and the Department of Social Services jointly review and approve local plans.
- Missouri's Department for Elementary and Secondary Education had representatives of the child care and Head Start communities as well as other agencies review the grant application for the state's new prekindergarten initiative as it was being developed. By asking for input in designing its grant application, the state has increased the likelihood that its application will enable it to select the most qualified programs.

Sharing Information

In several cases, state-level collaboration has allowed for sharing of information among agencies and programs, which has facilitated more effective delivery of services. For example:

- Collaboration has enabled Florida to develop a single shared waiting list by county for all publicly supported early childhood programs. This will help the state to better identify the unmet needs among children and families in the state as well as how to use state resources to meet those needs.
- Georgia's Office of School Readiness collaborates with the child care licensing office in keeping records on participating programs. By sharing information about child care licensing among agencies, the state can more effectively monitor the quality of programs.
- Hawaii coordinates its Preschool Open Doors Project with its child care subsidy program to make "one-stop shopping" available statewide. This makes it easier for parents to determine what options are available to them and their children.
- In Maryland, the state has worked with the Maryland Committee for Children, a private/public partnership organization, to connect schools with the child care resource and referral system. This will enable prekindergarten sites to offer information to parents on locating quality child care programs that offer extended hours.

- In Minnesota, the agency responsible for the state's Head Start model is working with the WIC (Women, Infants, and Children food and nutrition program) office to share eligibility information. A child eligible for Head Start will be made automatically eligible for WIC (since children are eligible for Head Start if they are living in families with incomes of up to 100 percent of poverty, and for WIC at up to 200 percent of poverty).

Coordinating Resources

In some states, collaboration allows for the sharing of financial and technical resources. This enables states to use these resources more efficiently and effectively. For example:

- Joint trainings for staff in early childhood programs, including prekindergarten, Head Start and child care, are held in Alaska, Arkansas, Georgia, Maryland, and Minnesota. These trainings allow for more efficient use of resources for professional development; instead of holding separate trainings for staff of each particular program, a single training can be made open to staff from all programs. In addition, joint trainings offer an opportunity to convey a common base of knowledge and understanding about the crucial elements of a quality early childhood program to teachers and staff from various types of programs.

- In Alaska, Head Start worked with child care to co-sponsor a conference on early childhood and brain development.

- In Colorado, staff from several agencies, including the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Education, the Head Start collaboration project, and child care, serve on a technical assistance team that works with the early childhood community.

- In Hawaii, state agencies are examining the possibility of shifting CCDBG funds to the Office of Community Services so that extended-day programs provided by Head Start could receive funds directly from the state agency through contracts.

- In Washington, the Head Start State Match Program coordinates with child care, schools, the state PTA, the Head Start Association, and other agencies and programs on parent involvement efforts.

State-Level Councils, Cabinets, and Workgroups

A number of states establish formal structures such as interagency cabinets, councils, or workgroups to provide an ongoing forum for addressing concerns that arise as states attempt to coordinate their programs. These committees can offer a mechanism for building relationships among those responsible for various early childhood programs, resolving conflicts, and developing plans for achieving long-term goals.

Administrators of state prekindergarten initiatives in at least 14 states indicated that they are involved in formal cabinets, councils or workgroups that bring together representatives from multiple agencies or sectors (Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, and Wisconsin). Maine went one step further and actually merged its separate Head Start and child care offices into a single agency.

Councils and cabinets may meet on an ad hoc basis as problems arise or on a more regular basis. For example, Iowa has a Child Development Coordinating Council that meets at least six times per year.

Councils and workgroups often play an important role in designing strategies for improving the availability, quality, and accessibility of care. For example:

- Maryland's interagency committee provided recommendations on coordinating prekindergarten programs with Head Start for extended-hour care.
- Rhode Island's Department of Human Services has established a child care legislative workgroup to determine how to most effectively use $21 million (over three years) in new state funding for early care and education programs.
- Vermont's workgroup has been developing a shared set of core standards that would apply to all early childhood programs.

CONCLUSION

Future Directions for Prekindergarten Initiatives

The increase in state funding for prekindergarten initiatives over the past decade suggests that states have made a significant commitment to early childhood care and education. Yet, despite the growing support for prekindergarten, state initiatives still fall short in several areas. Too many initiatives serve only a fraction of the eligible population, lack sufficient quality requirements, focus narrowly on education goals alone rather than on the complete needs of their children, operate on part-day schedules that make participation difficult for working parents, and/or make only limited efforts to collaborate with other early childhood programs. In the years ahead, there is much more states can do to ensure that their prekindergarten initiatives provide quality, comprehensive, accessible programs.

What do recent developments suggest about the possibilities that state prekindergarten initiatives will begin to address these shortcomings? There are some hopeful signs. More states are starting to coordinate prekindergarten with child care to provide the full-day programs that working parents need. In addition, states are somewhat more likely to offer comprehensive prekinder-

garten programs. A comprehensive approach has been adopted by new initiatives in Delaware, Nebraska, Tennessee, and Virginia, as well as by existing initiatives, such as Ohio's Public School Preschool, which revised its standards to make them consistent with Head Start Performance Standards. Another positive development is that a number of states now require prekindergarten programs to become accredited.

Other signs are less reassuring. Some of the new state initiatives, such as Kansas' At-Risk Four-Year-Old Children Preschool Program and New York's Universal Prekindergarten, are only designed to offer half-day, rather than full-day, programs. This is particularly disappointing given that these initiatives were designed just as the work requirements of the new welfare law began taking effect, making it more important than ever that parents trying to move from welfare to work have reliable, full-day arrangements for their children. In another troubling development, Texas eliminated the requirement that prekindergarten programs meet child care licensing standards. As a result, crucial quality protections, such as class size and child/staff ratio requirements, are now lacking.

Finally, while Georgia has demonstrated the significant benefits of universally available prekindergarten, few states are following its lead. New York plans to increase its investment to make prekindergarten available to all children in the near future, but debates throughout the 1999 legislative session, although ultimately resolved in favor of maintaining the initiative, demonstrate that expansion is by no means guaranteed. California has discussed establishing a universal initiative, but has yet to make substantial progress toward meeting this goal. Several other states have begun to consider universally available prekindergarten, but serious efforts to make it a reality are not expected any time in the near future.

Thus, while more states are recognizing the importance of early childhood education, there is still much progress to be made. States must continue to increase their investments in prekindergarten initiatives so that all children can have the quality, comprehensive early childhood experiences they need to enter school ready to read and succeed.

APPENDIX A

Evaluations Demonstrate the Benefits of Early Childhood Education

A number of states have conducted evaluations of their state prekindergarten initiatives. These studies demonstrate that early childhood education has several positive impacts on children's cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development.

A study of Washington's Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (ECEAP) found that children who participated in the state's prekindergarten program demonstrated greater academic progress than children who were eligible for the program but did not participate. The study also found that the children in the prekindergarten program were better behaved, had more enthusiasm about school and suffered fewer health problems. Parents of children who had attended prekindergarten were more involved in their children's education than parents whose children had not attended. These were the results of a seven-year study following children who had enrolled in the program in 1988.

A 1997 evaluation of Michigan's state prekindergarten program by the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation revealed similarly positive results, showing that prekindergarten makes a significant contribution to the development of four-year-olds. Evaluators compared the performance of children who had attended the prekindergarten program to the performance of children with similar family backgrounds who did not attend any prekindergarten program. Children with a prekindergarten experience consistently scored higher on measures of development such as retention of learning, imagination and creativity, initiative, completion of assignments, and attendance.

A study of Georgia's Prekindergarten Program conducted from 1993 to 1996 had positive findings as well. The study compared 315 at-risk children who participated in the program to a matched sample of children who did not participate. At the completion of the kindergarten year, the prekindergarten children were rated better than the comparison group in five areas of development, promotion to first grade, and attendance. After first grade, the prekindergarten children scored higher on 10 separate measures of academic development and achievement. In 1995–96, the prekindergarten children scored higher than the comparison group in math problem solving and reading comprehension on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. The scores of the prekindergarten children were also higher than the national average. In addition, prekindergarten children had a higher level of school attendance and were slightly more likely to be promoted to the next grade than the comparison group.

Colorado evaluated the impact of its prekindergarten initiative, the Colorado Preschool Program (CPP), on children's school readiness during the initiative's first three full school years (1989–90, 1990–91, and 1991–92). The evaluation studied the progress of a total of 7,500 children from 60 school districts throughout the state who participated in the initiative. Children were screened at the beginning and end of the prekindergarten year to assess their language skills, identify developmental delays (behavioral, physical, emotional, and sensory), and determine who needed referrals for special education. The scores on the post-tests showed positive gains beyond those due to maturation alone. Averages at the end of the year indicated that the large majority of children began kindergarten on par with their classmates.

A long-term study of Maryland's Extended Elementary Education Prekindergarten (EEEP) program examined the effects of prekindergarten on a child's school performance. In comparison to a similar group with no prekindergarten experience, children who participated in prekindergarten were less likely to be placed in special education once entering school or to be retained a grade. They also performed better on achievement tests. Yet, while the evaluation demonstrated the positive impacts of prekindergarten programs, it also showed that there are limitations to what the programs can accomplish. Economically disadvantaged children who had participated in prekindergarten programs still lagged behind their more advantaged peers in achievement scores.

A 1994 evaluation of prekindergarten in Texas found that, as of third grade, students who had participated in prekindergarten were less likely to be held back a grade, closer to being on grade level in their reading comprehension, and less likely to be referred for special education than children who had

been eligible for prekindergarten but had not participated. However, as with the Maryland study, the study in Texas showed that at-risk students with a prekindergarten experience still scored lower on third grade mathematics and reading tests than the statewide averages.

In Connecticut, the impact of prekindergarten participation was studied in a few school districts prior to implementation of the state's School Readiness initiative. The 1996 study compared schools within each of three districts—Bridgeport, Hartford, and New Haven—and found that schools in which a higher percentage of their students had attended prekindergarten also had a higher percentage of students meeting or exceeding the state goals for fourth grade reading, writing, and math skills. The differences in student performance among schools held even though the schools were serving similar populations (in terms of percentage of children eligible for free lunch and percentage not speaking English). For example, children attending New Haven's Brennan School—which has a full-day/full-year Head Start program based in the school, neighborhood-based maternal and child health outreach workers, a school-based health clinic, and strong parent and neighborhood groups—performed much better on a school readiness test than children attending Columbus School, which is also located in New Haven and serves a similar population as Brennan, but does not have these types of early childhood programs. The study's findings helped build the case for making prekindergarten more widely available, thus setting the stage for the passage of the legislation that established the prekindergarten initiative.

APPENDIX B

Individual State Summary Pages

ALABAMA

Preschool Collaboration Project

The initiative was established in 1996 as a three-year pilot. It is designed to provide parenting and early education to at-risk groups and focuses on language and literacy development. The initiative funds nine projects, which were collaboratively developed at the local level based on community needs and which generally combine state funding with other resources. Five of the projects are child-focused, two are family-focused, and two are two-generational. An evaluation study is being conducted to examine the effectiveness of programs' efforts to work with parents to help them build their children's language and literacy skills. The initiative is expected to be discontinued this year.

State Funding: $690,000 (1998–99) [Note: Figure is an estimate.]

Number of Children Served: 1,000 (1998–99) [Note: Figure is an estimate.]

Targeting Criteria: The initiative serves at-risk children ages birth to five. The state provides a list of indicators programs can use for determining eligibility, but gives individual projects some flexibility in designing their particular criteria. Most communities use income to establish eligibility, serving low-income children or children living in poverty. Some programs establish eligibility based on residence in a low-income community, multiple risk factors, and/or referrals from other agencies or programs.

Method for Distributing Funds: Communities developed their own proposals and applied to the state for competitive grants. Local school systems are the recipients of the direct funding and act as the fiscal agents.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Direct funding is provided to local school systems, which may subcontract with community agencies, including child care programs, Head Start programs, Even Start programs, and family services centers.

Hours of Operation: Program schedules vary. The majority operate part day (two-and-one-half to four hours) five days a week for the school year. At least one program offers full-day classes. Some do not operate daily.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: No state prekindergarten regulations.

Maximum Class Size: No state prekindergarten regulations.

Teacher Qualifications: No state prekindergarten regulations.

Monitoring: Site visits are provided to each program at least once a year (and more frequently with the research study the state conducted in the third year), including scheduled visits and visits according to programs' needs. However, these site visits are generally used to provide technical assistance rather than for regulatory purposes.

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ALASKA

Alaska Head Start Program (State-Funded Head Start Model)

Beginning in 1977, the state appropriated funds to meet and exceed the 20 percent federal match requirement for Head Start. In 1983, the state started appropriating funds for expansion of Head Start. The purposes of the state supplement are to increase the number of children served and to improve quality—for example, through funding for new buildings and renovation, equipment, collaboration, and salary increases.

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State Funding: $5,489,951 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 725 (1998–99) [Note: A total of 3,232 children were served through the combined federal and state Head Start program.]

Targeting Criteria: Children ages birth to five who have family incomes at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible.[97] The targeting criteria are applied in the same way as the Head Start criteria are applied.

Method for Distributing Funds: Targeted grants for Head Start programs are allocated by a formula recommended by the Alaska Head Start Directors Association and approved by the Department of Community and Regional Affairs. When new money became available in 1991, the funds were allocated by competitive grants. Since the initial grant process, the state has provided continuing grants based on the acceptable performance of the grantees. All federal grantees receive some state funds.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Federal Head Start agencies are eligible to receive funds.

Hours of Operation: The majority of programs are four to five days per week for a minimum of a half day for the school year. Full day, full year and other appropriate models are encouraged.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 17:2 (for three year olds); 10:1 (for four year olds)

Maximum Class Size: 17 (for three year olds); 20 (four year olds)

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have at least a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or a college degree with a specialization in early childhood education.[98]

Monitoring: All Head Start programs are monitored every three years by the federal regional office and the Alaska Head Start office. The state monitors accompany the federal monitors as part of the team.

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ARIZONA

Early Childhood State Block Grant (Prekindergarten Component)

Beginning in 1991, the state appropriated funds for prekindergarten projects for at-risk four year olds. In 1996, the prekindergarten projects were folded into a new Early Childhood Block Grant. The Block Grant may be used for prekindergarten, full day kindergarten, and supplements for grades K–3. The state requires prekindergarten programs to become nationally accredited by 1999. The accreditations that have been approved by the State Board of Education are: the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation, the National Accreditation Credential for Early Child Care and Education Programs (NACECEP), the National Child Care Association's National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA), American Montessori Society (AMS) accreditation, and American Montessori International (AMI) accreditation.

State Funding: $10,013,423 (1998–99) [Note: This is the amount of spending for the prekindergarten component of the block grant only, not the entire block grant.]

Number of Children Served: 3,482 (1998–99) [Note: This is the number of children served by the prekindergarten component of the block grant only, not the entire block grant.]

Targeting Criteria: To participate in the prekindergarten initiative, a child must be eligible for free lunch. Districts prioritize among eligible children by serving those most in need, based on district criteria. Participation in the prekindergarten component of the block grant had remained limited to four-year-olds through 1997–98, but in FY 1999, that age restriction was eliminated.

Method for Distributing Funds: Funds are allocated to school districts and charter schools based on the number of pupils in kindergarten and grades one through three who were eligible for free lunch (under the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Acts) during the prior fiscal year. The state requires each district to allow at least 50 percent of parents participating in the prekindergarten initiative to select a program of their choice.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Public schools and charter schools can receive direct funding. Head Start, non-profit child care agencies, for-profit child care agencies, and private schools may subcontract with the direct grantees to operate programs.

Hours of Operation: Programs generally operate five days a week. Hours differ from program to program, but typically operate for a half-day (morning or afternoon session). Only a few offer longer days.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 15:1 (in accordance with child care licensing guidelines)

Maximum Class Size: No state prekindergarten regulations

Teacher Qualifications: Different districts set their own standards (for example, a CDA or teacher certification in elementary education). There is no state certification for early childhood available.

Monitoring: Starting in FY 1999, block grant programs will be audited every three years by the state Auditor General's Office. In previous years, the state had no monitoring requirements, but it still conducted annual site visits to monitor for developmentally appropriate practices.

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ARKANSAS

Arkansas Better Chance (ABC)

The initiative began in 1991, as part of a larger education reform initiative supported by a dedicated sales tax for the Educational Excellence Trust Fund. The goal of the ABC initiative is school readiness. Local programs must meet state accreditation requirements for Arkansas Child Care Approval. One innovative aspect of the program is that the state Department of Education, which administers the initiative, works with the Department of Health to provide EPSDT screening for all ABC children (even those not eligible for Medicaid).

State Funding: $10,000,000 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 9,048 (1997–98) [Note: Data for 1998–99 are not available, but the state estimated enrollment to be approximately the same. The enrollment total for 1997–98 includes 7,999 children who attended for a full school year and 1,049 who only attended during the summer.]

Targeting Criteria: The initiative is targeted to children ages birth to five years who are considered to be at risk for school failure. Children must meet at least one of the following criteria: low family income; parents with low educational levels; low birth weight; teen parent; child abuse or neglect; a primary language other than English; developmental delays; or eligibility for special education (under IDEA). Localities can choose among these selection criteria and can set their own priorities.

Method for Distributing Funds: Funds are allocated through competitive grants, based on geographic distribution, with priority given to high poverty areas. The competitive grants were initially distributed five years ago. Since that time, those programs that were awarded grants have generally been allowed to continue to receive funding, provided they have met the quality requirements, which includes a review using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS).

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Public schools, Head Start agencies, non-profit child care agencies, in-home providers, educational cooperatives, universities, and hospitals are eligible to receive direct funding.

Hours of Operation: Programs usually operate for school-day hours, Monday through Friday, for the school year.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 10:1

Maximum Class Size: 20

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have one of the following: 1) College degree with specialization in early childhood education; 2) Teacher certification in elementary education (the state is in process of adopting an early childhood certification, but this is not available yet); 3) Certification in special education with early childhood endorsement; or 4) Home economics degree with emphasis on child development.

Monitoring: ECERS is used for annual evaluations of programs.

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CALIFORNIA

State Preschool Program

In 1966, the legislature authorized the preschool program with the goal of preparing at-risk children for school. In 1998, a California Department of Education (CDE) Task Force recommended universal prekindergarten for three- and four-year-olds, with the purpose of providing all children with the opportunity to attend quality prekindergarten and improve their chances for later school success. The state has not yet followed up on this recommendation.

State Funding: $127,000,000 (1997–98)

Number of Children Served: 145,719 (1997–98) [Note: There may be some duplication in this count.]

Targeting Criteria: Children who are between three years, nine months and four years, nine months old are eligible. First priority is given to children identified for child protective services, followed by age-eligible children with the lowest family incomes.

Method for Distributing Funds: A competitive grant process is used. The state targets underserved areas.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Public schools, Head Start agencies, non-profit child care agencies, for-profit child care agencies, and private schools may receive direct funding to operate programs.

Hours of Operation: Programs must operate for a minimum of five days per week, three hours a day, for the school year. A limited number of programs offer full-working-day services.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 8:1

Maximum Class Size: 24 (recommended)

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have a bachelor's degree in child development and a year of experience, or an associate's degree in child development with two years of experience, or 15 units in child development with four years of experience.

Monitoring: Programs are expected to file quarterly attendance and fiscal reports and conduct an annual fiscal audit and program quality self-review using instruments developed by the California Department of Education. The Department does on-site monitoring for quality using a three-year review system. The state is in the process of developing a new monitoring system. The Community Care Licensing Division of the Department of Social Services monitors programs for health and safety, class size, ratios, and teaching qualifications.

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COLORADO

Colorado Preschool Program (CPP)

The program was established in 1988 as a result of efforts by the Governor's Office, the business community, and the Department of Education. The goal of the initiative is to reduce the high school dropout rate by increasing the developmental levels of children with risk factors. In 1997, CPP funding guidelines were changed to allow a certain amount of the funds to be used to extend half-day kindergarten to full-day kindergarten for children with risk factors. The initiative requires local management and oversight by a broad-based district prekindergarten council. The council must provide a plan indicating how it will provide comprehensive services.

In 12 communities participating in the state's Consolidated Child Care pilot project, funding for the prekindergarten initiative is combined with child care funds to provide full-day comprehensive care for children ages birth to five. The project is intended to give communities an opportunity to examine what resources are available for early childhood programs, identify existing gaps, and determine what more is needed to provide quality care and education. The 12 pilot communities are allowed to request waivers of existing requirements so they can use prekindergarten dollars to serve infants and toddlers or coordinate resources in other ways. The state plans to extend this pilot to an additional six communities in 1999.

State Funding: $21,640,000 (1998–99) [Note: The initiative also supports full-day kindergarten slots. However, this funding amount is a state estimate of spending on prekindergarten only, excluding the portion of the total amount used for kindergarten.]

Number of Children Served: 8,350 (1998–99) [Note: The enrollment total provided here includes only those children in prekindergarten. The initiative also supports 500 full-day kindergarten slots.]

Targeting Criteria: Four- or five-year-olds who will be eligible for kindergarten the following year are eligible. Priority is given to children with one or more of the following risk factors associated with school problems: low family income, child abuse/neglect, non-English speaker, low parent education levels, teenage parent, need for language development, unemployment in the family, frequent moves, homelessness, family history of learning problems, low self-esteem, poor social skills, or drug and/or alcohol abuse in the family. Children receiving social services because they have been victims of abuse and/or neglect are automatically eligible for the program.

District councils managing the program decide as a group how to screen for risk factors and which ones deserve priority. School districts must include a record of the risk factors in their files for each child to justify their eligibility. Districts can use risk factors other than those listed above if they choose. For example, isolation is used as a factor in some rural districts.

Method for Distributing Funds: Local school districts apply on a competitive basis for grants. The state determines how many, if any, slots to fund in each district, and the amount provided per slot to each district is determined using a funding formula. In the state, 123 out of 176 districts are participating in the program.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Only public schools can receive direct funding. Head Start, non-profit child care agencies, for-profit child care agencies, family child care homes, community agencies, and public agencies such as community colleges can subcontract with public schools to operate programs.

Hours of Operation: The law requires total contact hours equivalent to two-and-one-half hours a day, four days a week, for the school year. Most programs operate on this schedule, but some programs provide two school-day (five-hour) classes a week.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 8:1

Maximum Class Size: 15

Teacher Qualifications: A teacher must have credits in early childhood, a portfolio that demonstrates knowledge or necessary skills, or must have work experience and be supervised by someone with a bachelor's degree. The teacher also must have knowledge and experience in four areas (early childhood development, applying developmentally appropriate practices in the classroom, knowledge of multicultural education, and knowledge of parent partnerships) or must be making progress in these areas as part of their professional development.

Monitoring: All programs are monitored by the child care licensing system. This system is risk-based, with programs having the greatest difficulty meeting the standards receiving more frequent visits. There is no additional regular monitoring for the Colorado Preschool Program. However, an early childhood team, which includes Head Start staff, visits two communities each year to examine all the early childhood program sites in a district. These visits are made on an informal basis, generally at the request of communities who would like technical assistance.

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CONNECTICUT

School Readiness and Child Care Initiative

In 1997, the legislature enacted the School Readiness Initiative to promote equal access, increase the number of spaces, and improve the quality of programs in low-income communities. Programs are required to make full-day prekindergarten available to families who need it and make linkages with health care, social services, and other supports to meet children's needs for comprehensive services. They are also required to be or become accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, American Montessori or the New England Association of Schools or meet the Head Start Performance Standards within three years.[122] The state initiative emphasizes community collaboration, requiring districts to establish school readiness councils to coordinate School Readiness

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funds with other resources. The state has supplemented its prekindergarten initiative with loan and bond assistance for facilities improvement and construction, to ensure an adequate supply of safe, spacious early childhood facilities. The state also funds accreditation assistance efforts and professional development opportunities.

State Funding: $39,000,000 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 5,000 (1998–99)

Targeting Criteria: The initiative is targeted to children ages three and four who reside in one of the 14 priority school districts or in the attendance area of a severe needs school (one in which 40 percent or more of the children are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch) and who are not currently in a prekindergarten program. At least 60 percent of the children served must have a family income at or below 75 percent of state median income. Priority is given to children needing full-day programs.

Method for Distributing Funds: The state awards grants on a non-competitive basis to 14 districts designated as "priority districts." There are an additional fifty towns identified as having "severe needs" (40 percent or more of children eligible for free or reduced-price meals) that compete for grants of $100,000 each. Districts and towns receiving grants in turn distribute their funds through a local RFP process to providers, based on the recommendations of the local School Readiness Council and its plan as approved by the Department of Education and Department of Social Services.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Direct funding is provided to community councils, whose membership is appointed by the school superintendent and the mayor. Head Start, non-profit child care agencies, for-profit child care agencies, and public and private schools may subcontract with the direct grantees to operate programs.

Hours of Operation: All programs operate five days a week for a minimum of a half-day, and are required to offer full-working-day services to any family that needs it.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 10:1

Maximum Class Size: 20

Teacher Qualifications: Qualifications for teachers range from nine months of work experience and a CDA credential or 12 credits in early childhood education/child development, to a bachelor's degree in early childhood education and at least three months of work experience. Teachers must have 12 credits in early childhood education and 1,080 hours of supervised experience over a nine month period in a child care setting that meets state standards.

Monitoring: Local School Readiness Councils and grantees are responsible for assessing local performance and for submitting monthly data reports and an annual report required by the state. Councils must address program evaluation and articulate how they plan to monitor programs in their local school readiness plans. The Department of Education and the Department of Social Services meet with the local councils to discuss implementation of standards. The two agencies monitor programs through informal site visits and the reports submitted by the councils. These reports provide information on attendance, referrals, children's health status, immunizations, and fee collection. If the state identifies a problem through the reports, it will follow up via telephone calls, meetings, site visits, and technical assistance.

For more information, contact:

Joyce Staples
Bureau of Early Childhood Education and Social Services
Connecticut State Department of Education
25 Industrial Park Rd.
Middletown, CT 06457
Phone: 860.807.2057
Fax: 860.807.2062
Email: *joyce.staples@po.state.ct.us*

State-Funded Head Start Model

Since 1968, the state has appropriated funds for Head Start. Currently, the funds are used to increase the number of children served and extend the hours of programs.

State Funding: $5,100,000 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: Data are not available. [Note: State funding for Head Start provides full-day funding for 440 children as well as resources to extend part-day programs to full-day for additional children. The state was unable to provide data on the number of children for which the state provided extended-day funding.]

Targeting Criteria: Children who are between three years old and kindergarten entry and have family incomes at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible.

Method for Distributing Funds: Competitive grants are used to distribute funds.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Federal Head Start agencies are eligible to receive funds.

Hours of Operation: Federal Head Start regulations require that programs operate a minimum of three and one-half hours per day, four days a week, 128 days a year. A portion of state funds are used to offer extended-day services.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 17:2 (for three-year-olds); 10:1 (for four-year-olds)

Maximum Class Size: 17 (for three-year-olds); 20 (for four-year-olds)

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers are required to have at least a CDA credential or a college degree with specialization in early childhood education.

Monitoring: The state provides some financial and program monitoring through visits to programs, but there are no intensive monitoring efforts or any requirements for how often the state must visit programs. The state largely relies on the federal regional Head Start office to monitor programs (progams are monitored by the federal regional office once every three years).

For more information, contact:

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Education Consultant
Connecticut State Department of Education
25 Industrial Park Rd.
Middletown, CT 06457
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Fax: 860.807.2062
Email: *camille.alleyne@po.state.ct.us*

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DELAWARE

Early Childhood Assistance Program (State-Funded Head Start Model)

The Early Childhood Assistance Program was established in 1994 to address the need for improved school readiness by giving children with family incomes at or below poverty at least one year of prekindergarten and reducing the long waiting lists at Head Start centers. The initiative follows Head Start Performance Standards. Most of the programs are operated by federal Head Start grantees, but the state also funds prekindergarten programs that do not receive federal funds.

State Funding: $3,600,000 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 843 (1998–99)

Targeting Criteria: Children who are four years old by August 31 prior to entering the program and who have family incomes at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible.

Method for Distributing Funds: Programs are funded by competitive grants through a two-step process. First, the state conducts an assessment to determine priority geographic areas using population information. Applications are then reviewed and grants awarded based on a series of criteria, including whether the programs applying target the priority regions. The grants are on a two-year cycle, with programs reapplying every two years.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Public schools, Head Start agencies, non-profit child care agencies, for-profit child care agencies, community agencies, and community colleges may receive direct funding. Family child care homes are eligible to subcontract with any of the direct grantees listed to operate programs.

Hours of Operation: Programs must operate for a minimum of four days a week, for four hours a day. Approximately one-quarter of the children attend four days a week, and the remainder participate five days a week.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 10:1

Maximum Class Size: 20

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have at least a CDA credential or a college degree with a specialization in early childhood education.

Monitoring: An evaluation plan is in place to assess the child, family, and community impacts of the initiative as well as family and community satisfaction. Programs are monitored annually for compliance with federal Head Start Performance Standards. The state Department of Education monitors all of the state-only funded programs and joins the federal monitoring teams for reviews of federally funded programs that also receive state funds.

For more information, contact:

Jim J. Lesko
Delaware Department of Education
Curriculum and Instructional Improvement
Exceptional Children and Early Childhood Education
PO Box 1402, Townsend Building
Dover, DE 19903

Phone: 302-739-4667
Fax: 302-739-2388
Email: jlesko@state.de.us

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Public School Prekindergarten Program

The city has had prekindergarten since the late 1960's. The programs provide developmentally appropriate, experience- and language-based instruction.

State Funding: $14,591,000 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 3,381 (1998–99)

Targeting Criteria: All four-year-old children residing in the district are eligible to participate. Children are served on a first-come, first-served basis.

Method for Distributing Funds: Each school is required to have at least one program. The city reimburses schools based on enrollment.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Only public schools may operate programs.

Hours of Operation: Programs operate on a school-day schedule (typically, 8:45 A.M. to 3:15 P.M.), five days a week, for the school year.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: No district prekindergarten regulations.

Maximum Class Size: No district prekindergarten regulations.

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must be certified in early childhood education. They are required to have in-service training every year (15 hours) and must be recertified every five years.

Monitoring: Individual schools monitor their own programs.

For more information, contact:

Mary Gill
Executive Director
Office of Elementary Programs
825 N. Capitol St. NE Room 8127
Washington, DC 20002

Phone: 202-442-5650
Fax: 202-442-5602

District-Funded Head Start Model

The city provides matching funds to support the federal Head Start program in public schools.

State Funding: $2,570,000 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 1,450 (1998–99)

Targeting Criteria: Children who have family incomes at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible.

Method for Distributing Funds: Matching funds are provided on a non-competitive basis.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: The public school Head Start grantee operates programs.

Hours of Operation: Programs must operate for a minimum of four days a week, for four hours a day.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 10:1

Maximum Class Size: 20

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have at least a CDA credential or a college degree with a specialization in early childhood education.

Monitoring: Monitoring is conducted by the federal Head Start agency.

For more information, contact:

Beverly Dugger
DCPS Head Start Program
12th Place and Jasper Rd., SE
Washington, DC 20020

Phone: 202-698-1033
Fax: 202-698-1077

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FLORIDA

Prekindergarten Early Intervention Program

The Prekindergarten Early Intervention Program evolved from interest in expanding prekindergarten opportunities beyond migrant children, who the state was already targeting through a separate prekindergarten initiative (see the description of the State Migrant Prekindergarten Program below). In 1987, the legislature established the Early Intervention Program in recognition that high quality prekindergarten education programs increase children's chances of achieving future education success and becoming productive members of society. The goal was school readiness.

State Funding: $97,000,328 (1998-99)

Number of Children Served: 29,639 (1998-99) [Note: Figure provided is the number of full-time equivalent slots.]

Targeting Criteria: Three- and four-year-olds are eligible for the program. Priority is given to economically disadvantaged children (children who are eligible for the free lunch program) and children from migrant families, working poor families, and families in the state's welfare-to-work programs. At least 75 percent of children served must be eligible for the free lunch program and be in families participating in the welfare-to-work program. Additional targets include children who have been abused, are in foster care, were prenatally exposed to drugs, or have disabilities.

Method for Distributing Funds: Funds are distributed to school districts on a formula basis. Each school district receives base funding (of $65,000), plus additional funds in accordance with a formula that takes into account various factors such as the at-risk population.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Only public schools may receive direct funding. Public schools, Head Start, non-profit child care agencies, for-profit child care agencies, private schools, and community agencies are eligible to operate programs by subcontracting with the public schools.

Hours of Operation: Programs must operate for a minimum of five days a week, six hours per day. Programs may earn additional "full-time equivalent" credits (FTEs)—up to 1.67 FTEs per pupil—if they serve children for a full working day.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 10:1

Maximum Class Size: 20 (recommended)

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have a CDA credential, or certification in early childhood education, and a 30-hour training course offered by the Department of Education and the Department of Children and Family Services. As of July 1, 1998, the appropriate certification is prekindergarten primary (age three to grade three) or preschool education (birth to age four).

Monitoring: The districts are responsible for monitoring their own programs. There is no state monitoring. However, the Department of Education assigns a monitoring specialist to each of five regions.

For more information, contact:

Patty Ball Thomas
Administrator
Office of Early Intervention and School Readiness
Florida Education Center
325 West Gaines St., Suite 325
Tallahassee, FL 32399
Phone: 850-922-0034
Fax: 850-487-0946
Email: *ballthp@mail.doe.state.fl.us*

State Migrant Prekindergarten Program

The legislature first appropriated state funds to support prekindergarten migrant education in 1978. These funds supplemented federal Title I funding. Funds are used to provide prekindergarten classes that meet on a regular basis as well as for supplemental services, such as nutrition services, dental care, and transportation for children who may or may not be enrolled in an instructional program.

State Funding: $3,295,172 (1998-99)

Number of Children Served: 7,552 (1998-99) [Note: This count includes 6,435 children who were served for the school term and 1,117 who were served for the summer term. Some of these children are receiving supplementary services only, and are not enrolled in a prekindergarten program that meets regularly.]

Targeting Criteria: The program serves three- and four-year-old children whose families are migrant workers.

Method for Distributing Funds: Funding is provided to school districts on a formula allocation basis. The amount of funding a district receives depends on the number of children in the district whose families are migrant workers.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Only public schools may receive direct funding. Public schools, Head Start agencies, non-profit child care agencies, for-profit child care agencies, private schools, and community agencies are eligible to operate programs by subcontracting with the public schools.

Hours of Operation: Most programs operate six hours a day, five days per week during the school year.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 10:1

Maximum Class Size: 20 (recommended)

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have certification in early childhood or primary education.

Monitoring: The districts are responsible for monitoring their own programs. There is no state monitoring. However, the Department of Education assigns a monitoring specialist to each of five regions.

For more information, contact:

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Florida Education Center
325 West Gaines St., Suite 325
Tallahassee, FL 32399
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Fax: 850-487-0946
Email: *ballthp@mail.doe.state.fl.us*

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GEORGIA

Georgia Prekindergarten Program for Four-Year-Olds

The program, which is supported with funds from the state lottery, was started in 1993 to provide at-risk four-year-olds with a quality prekindergarten education. In 1995, the program was opened to all four-year-olds, without regard to income, and currently is the only state prekindergarten initiative that is universally available to all children whose parents want them to participate. One unique component of the initiative is its family support activities. Local programs serving a large number of at-risk children are eligible to receive funds to hire resource coordinators, who help families connect with other programs and assistance.

State Funding: $217,000,000 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 61,000 (1998–99)

Targeting Criteria: Children who are Georgia residents and are four years old on September 1 of that current school year are eligible. There are no income requirements.

Method for Distributing Funds: Contracts are awarded to prekindergarten providers through a competitive process, subject to funding availability, previous program compliance (for continuation programs), and identified regional need. The amount of funding each grantee receives is determined using a formula related to enrollment. Providers turn in rosters three times a year and money is paid on a per child weekly rate for 36 weeks based on two factors: the credential level of the teacher and the funding zone in which that entity is located.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Public schools, Head Start agencies, non-profit child care agencies, for-profit child care agencies, private schools, hospitals, the Department of Family Services, universities, churches, vocational/technical schools, the Atlanta Job Corps, YMCAs and YWCAs, and military bases may apply for direct funding.

Hours of Operation: Programs operate a minimum of five days a week and for a minimum of six and one-half hours per day.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 10:1

Maximum Class Size: 20

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have a CDA credential, teacher certification in early childhood education, a college degree with specialization in early childhood education, teacher certification in elementary education, a Montessori diploma (a two-year program), or a vocational early childhood education degree.

Monitoring: Early childhood consultants from the Office of School Readiness conduct two or three site visits annually to each program to assess program performance and offer technical assistance as needed. These consultants conduct a formal on-site evaluation of each program annually.

For more information, contact:

Kathleen Gooding
Assistant Director for Instructional Services
Office of School Readiness
10 Park Place South, Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: 404-656-5957
Fax: 404-651-7430
Email: *ggkn@mail.osr.state.ga.us*

HAWAII

Preschool Open Doors

The state initiative enables parents to purchase care in a licensed child care facility of their choice. The initiative focuses on children who are from low-income families and who have special needs.

State Funding: $2,700,000 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 780 (1998–99)

Targeting Criteria: Three- and four-year-olds with special needs whose families have incomes below 75 percent of the state median income are eligible. Priority is given to children closest to kindergarten age, those with special needs, and those with the lowest incomes. Children are considered to have special needs if they are homeless, speak limited English, have developmental delays, have physical or mental impairments, or are in foster care. The vast majority of children participating in the initiative have family incomes that are below poverty.

Method for Distributing Funds: The state provides eligible families with certificates that may be used to enroll their children in any licensed private or public child care center or prekindergarten program the family selects. The state usually gives the certificate first to the parent, but it will also provide reimbursement directly to the program if both the program and the parents agree to this method of payment. The maximum amount the state will provide through the certificates is $350 per month.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Certificates provided through the initiative may be used to cover tuition in licensed private or public child care centers or preschools.

Hours of Operation: Certificates are for full-day care, five days a week, nine months a year.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 16:1 (in accordance with child care licensing guidelines)

Maximum Class Size: No state prekindergarten regulations.

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers may qualify with a bachelor's degree in any field with 12 credits in early childhood education and six months of experience. A teacher may also qualify with a postsecondary credential in a child development associate program or an organized two-year college program and certificate in early childhood education, plus one year of supervised training experience in an early childhood program. These qualifications are in accordance with child care licensing guidelines.

Monitoring: Programs are monitored by the child care licensing agency. There is no separate state monitoring through the prekindergarten initiative.

For more information, contact:

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Benefit, Employment and Support Services Division
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Email: *gkemp@dhs.state.hi.us*

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State-Funded Head Start Model

Beginning in 1965, the state legislature appropriated funds for Community Action Program (CAP) agencies to match federal funds, including those for Head Start. In 1987, an allocation was made within these state funds specifically for Head Start. More recently, the state funds for Head Start have been targeted to extend the day of Head Start to support working families, particularly those moving from welfare to work.

State Funding: $387,387 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 229 (1998–99) [Note: For these children, state funding supports extended hours, but the core part-day program is supported by the federal Head Start program.]

Targeting Criteria: The initiative serves Head Start eligible children (children who are between three years old and kindergarten entry and have family incomes at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level) whose parents are working, in employment-related training, or education.

Method for Distributing Funds: The state uses a competitive process. Five of the state's eight federal Head Start grantees receive funds.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Federal Head Start grantees are eligible for direct funding. (Non-federal Head Start grantees were eligible to apply in the last funding cycle, but will not be allowed to apply in the next cycle.)

Hours of Operation: State funds are used to provide extended hours.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 17:2 (for three-year-olds); 10:1 (for four-year-olds)

Maximum Class Size: 17 (for three-year-olds); 20 (for four-year-olds)

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have at least a CDA credential or a college degree with specialization in early education.

Monitoring: The state monitors programs by receiving quality program and fiscal reports quarterly and by visiting programs at least annually. These state monitoring efforts are not coordinated with federal monitoring efforts.

For more information, contact:

Paul Pladera
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
Office of Community Services
830 Punchbowl St., Room 420
Honolulu, HI 96813

Phone: 808-586-8675
Fax: 808-586-8685

ILLINOIS

Early Childhood Block Grant (Prekindergarten Component)

Education reform legislation containing provisions for a state-funded prekindergarten program passed in 1985. The program serves children ages three to five who are not eligible for kindergarten entry and who have more than one risk factor for academic failure. In the 1998 legislative session, the prekindergarten program was incorporated into a new block grant along with a parent training program and other prevention initiatives serving teenage and first time parents.

State Funding: $136,000,000 (1998–99) [Note: This is the estimated amount of spending for the prekindergarten component of the block grant. The figure was calculated by CDF using estimates provided by the state. In 1998, the state combined its prekindergarten initiative with two other initiatives into a block grant with an overall funding level of $154.6 million, an increase of 15 percent over the total funding for the three programs in 1997–98. The total for state spending provided here is based on the state's assessment that spending on the prekindergarten component increased by at least 10 percent over the 1997–98 funding provided for prekindergarten ($123.4 million) when it was a separate initiative.]

Number of Children Served: 50,000 (1998–99) [Note: This figure for prekindergarten enrollment was calculated by CDF based on the state's estimate that the number of children served in 1998–99 was approximately 10 percent greater than the number served in 1997–98 (45,854).]

Targeting Criteria: Three-, four-, and five-year-olds who are not eligible for kindergarten entry (not five years old on or before September 1), and who have more than one risk factor for academic failure are eligible. Risk factors are determined by local school districts, but within guidelines provided by the state (factors include living in poverty, being at risk of abuse and neglect, having teen parents, or having parents with low education levels).

Method for Distributing Funds: Funds are distributed to local school districts using competitive grants.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Public schools are eligible to receive direct funding. Head Start agencies and non-profit child care agencies may subcontract with the public schools to operate programs.

Hours of Operation: Most programs serve children four days per week with staff development and parent involvement activities on the fifth day.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 10:1

Maximum Class Size: 20

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have an early childhood teaching certificate.

Monitoring: Each district is required to send program and student demographic and attendance data to the state Board of Education on a yearly basis. BOE early childhood consultants provide on-site technical assistance and program evaluation throughout the year.

For more information, contact:

Kay Henderson
Division of Early Childhood Education
Illinois State Board of Education
100 N. First Street, (E230)
Springfield, IL 62777

Phone: 217-524-4835
Fax: 217-785-7849

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IOWA

Comprehensive Child Development Program "Shared Visions"

In 1989, state funding was appropriated for early childhood initiatives to promote the health and well-being of young children at risk of later school difficulties. Prekindergarten programs are required to be accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children by their third year of receiving funding. The initiative has a strong comprehensive services component, requiring that programs develop a plan for addressing health and safety issues, medical needs, social services, and nutrition. Recent state legislation created "empowerment areas" whose goal is to provide comprehensive services through local control and coordinated and/or combined state and federal funding. At present, the child development program funding remains distinct, but it may be incorporated into the empowerment area funding sources in future years.

State Funding: $7,633,087 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 2,466 (1998–99)

Targeting Criteria: Currently, children who are three or four years old by September 15, whose family income is below 130 percent of the federal poverty level, and who have at least one other risk factor are eligible (for example, children of teen parents, children with birth conditions, children whose parents are incarcerated, children in families with substance abuse problems, and children experiencing violence in the home).

Method for Distributing Funds: Funds are distributed through competitive grants.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Public schools, Head Start agencies, non-profit child care agencies, and community agencies may receive direct funding. Head Start and non-profit agencies are also eligible to operate programs through subgrants.

Hours of Operation: Programs operate a minimum of four days per week. Head Start programs generally operate four days a week, with the fifth day used for home visits, teacher-parent conferences, or a teacher planning day. Many programs in public schools operate five days a week. Although programs must operate a minimum of three hours per day, about 60 to 70 percent of programs are open for a full working day.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 8:1

Maximum Class Size: 16

Teacher Qualifications: Requirements depend on the program sponsor. Teachers in public schools must have a certification with early childhood education endorsement or a four-year college degree with a specialization in early childhood education. Teachers in community-based agencies must have at least a CDA credential or an associate's degree with specialization in early childhood education.

Monitoring: Programs are generally visited at least once every three years. If a program's accreditation is deferred because it is not meeting the accreditation criteria, that program will receive a visit and a corrective action plan will be developed.

For more information, contact:

Donna Eggleston
Early Childhood Consultant
Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319-0146

Phone: 515-281-7844
Fax: 515-242-6019
Email: *donna.eggleston@ed.state.ia.us*

KANSAS

At-Risk Four-Year-Old Children Preschool Program

The state prekindergarten initiative began in 1998. Programs are required to operate for the same number of hours as kindergartens (465 hours a year—programs may provide two and one-half hours a day for five days a week, or may operate on a part-week schedule that provides an equivalent number of annual hours). The programs are asked to follow the state board's adopted quality standards for early childhood education. Programs must provide transportation, nutrition and health services, and parental involvement opportunities. Programs are also encouraged to coordinate services with other programs. The program will be evaluated using a work sampling system (with pre- and post-measures to assess children's progress) to determine whether four-year-olds benefit from the program.

State Funding: $3,000,000 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 1,350 (1998–99)

Targeting Criteria: Children who are four years old (by August 31) and who are at-risk (i.e., children of teenage parents, single parents, or parents with low literacy levels [those who do not have their high school diploma or GED], children in poverty, children who do not speak English, children referred from the welfare program [SRS] or from other early childhood programs such as Even Start or Parents as Teachers, and children who are developmentally or academically delayed but who do not qualify for special education). The state requires that each child meet three of the at-risk criteria.

Method for Distributing Funds: Funds are distributed through a competitive grant process. Districts are reimbursed on a per pupil basis, at half the full-day rate used for elementary students.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Only school districts are eligible to operate programs.

Hours of Operation: Programs operate for a half day. The majority operate at least four days a week.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: Local decision

Maximum Class Size: Local decision

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have certification in early childhood or elementary education.

Monitoring: There is no set monitoring policy, but routine visits are made when possible. The state expects to visit about a third of the programs each year.

For more information, contact:

Norma Cregan
Department of Education
120 Southeast 10th St.
Topeka, KS 66612

Phone: 785-296-4906
Fax: 785-296-1413
Email: *ncregan@ksbe.state.ks.us*

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State-Funded Head Start Model

The state made state funds available for Head Start for the first time in 1998. The state has not yet distributed the funds, or determined how it will do so. However, it is expected that the funds will be used to enable sites serving children ages birth to age three through Early Head Start—which the state also supplements with its own funds—to continue serving these children once they are old enough for Head Start.

State Funding: $2,500,000 (1998-99) [Note: Funding has not yet been distributed.]

Number of Children Served: Not applicable. [Note: Funding has not yet been distributed.]

Targeting Criteria: Children who are between three years old and kindergarten entry and have family incomes at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible.

Method for Distributing Funds: The state has not yet distributed the funds, but it expects to use a competitive process and will likely give priority to grantees that are receiving state funds for Early Head Start.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Federal Head Start agencies are eligible to receive funds.

Hours of Operation: Federal Head Start regulations require that programs operate a minimum of three and one-half hours per day, four days a week, 128 days a year.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 17:2 (for three-year-olds); 10:1 (for four-year-olds)

Maximum Class Size: 17 (for three-year-olds); 20 (for four-year-olds)

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have at least a CDA credential or a college degree with specialization in early childhood education.

Monitoring: To be determined.

For more information, contact:

Verna Weber
Director, Child Care Services
Department of Social & Rehabilitation Services
Docking State Office Building Room 681W
915 SW Harrison
Topeka, KS 66612

Phone: 785-296-3349
Direct: 785-368-6354
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KENTUCKY

Kentucky Preschool Program

In 1990, the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) established the preschool program to assist children to succeed in school and, in turn, help schools achieve the goals set in the accountability sections of the Reform Act. The prekindergarten program aims to prepare children for school by providing a developmentally appropriate program for those at risk of educational failure, with a special emphasis on social/interpersonal skills. The program includes coordination of health and social services and parent outreach. The state requires that districts make prekindergarten available to all four-year-olds that meet free lunch income guidelines and all three- and four-year-olds with disabilities, regardless of income. The state emphasizes collaboration with Head Start—local school districts are required to coordinate their prekindergarten programs with Head Start, and several districts have blended classrooms.

State Funding: $39,700,000 (1998-99)

Number of Children Served: 15,433 (1998-99)

Targeting Criteria: The initiative is targeted to children who are considered to be at risk of school failure because they are from low-income families or because they have disabilities. Four-year-olds are eligible if they qualify for free lunch through the National School Lunch Program (i.e., have a family income below 130 percent of the federal poverty line). Three- and four-year-old children with delays or disabilities, regardless of family income, are also eligible. Children are identified as having a disability through screenings, followed by a full, more in-depth exam. Federal procedures and criteria are used to determine the extent of the disability. Districts are required to make prekindergarten available to all eligible children.

Method for Distributing Funds: Funding is allocated to school districts on a formula basis. The amount of funds a district receives is determined by the previous year's prekindergarten enrollment.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Only public schools are eligible to receive direct funding. Head Start agencies, non-profit child care agencies, for-profit child care agencies, family child care homes, private schools, and community agencies are eligible to operate programs through subgrants with the public schools.

Hours of Operation: Programs operate for a minimum of four days a week, three hours a day.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 10:1

Maximum Class Size: 20

Teacher Qualifications: In all settings, a classroom must be led by either a "preschool teacher" or an "associate preschool teacher" supervised by a preschool teacher.

A "preschool teacher" must have certification in interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education (Kentucky's regular and special education unified certificate covering children from birth through kindergarten), kindergarten certification, elementary special education certification, or a college degree (bachelor's or master's) in a related field (e.g., early childhood education, child development, or early childhood special education).

An "associate preschool teacher" holds a CDA credential, an associate's degree in early childhood or child development, or a Kentucky Technical School diploma in preschool/child care. Associate teachers work as lead teachers under the curriculum supervision of a qualified teacher.

Monitoring: Each district's prekindergarten program coordinator performs fiscal monitoring four times per year. Each district is also required to conduct an annual program evaluation to review rates of participation, parent satisfaction, and child progress in primary grades.

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LOUISIANA

Preschool Block Grant

A preschool program for at-risk four-year-olds was established by the legislature in 1985. In 1993, the program became the Preschool Block Grant with funding from the Education Quality Support Fund. The goal is to improve children's readiness for kindergarten. The state school board increased funding for the 1998–99 school year by reserving a large portion of the education fund for prekindergarten.

State Funding: $6,650,000 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 3,200 (1998–99)

Targeting Criteria: Children must be eligible to enter kindergarten the next year (i.e., four years old). Local school systems develop their own eligibility criteria for identifying at-risk children. Districts most commonly target low-income children. Other factors considered are the child's family background and home environment—such as whether they are children of single parents. First priority must be given to children who are developmentally delayed, as determined by a screening instrument (but who are not eligible for special education).

Method for Distributing Funds: Funding is provided on a formula basis. Each district receives a base of $30,000 plus a per pupil amount based on at-risk indicators (the population eligible for free and reduced-price lunch).

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Only public schools are eligible to operate programs.

Hours of Operation: Most programs operate five days per week. They must operate for a minimum of the school day—programs generally follow the regular school schedule of the district (e.g. 8:30 A.M. to 3:30 P.M.)

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 10:1 (recommended)

Maximum Class Size: 20 (recommended)

Teacher Qualifications: Teacher certification in early childhood education, nursery school, kindergarten, or elementary education is required. A district is permitted to hire non-certified teachers if there is a shortage of certified teachers that would prevent a school from offering prekindergarten.

Monitoring: All programs complete end-of-the-year reports noting the cognitive, social, and physical development of their students. Independent consultants visit some programs. In addition, programs operating under the Educational Fund, which includes the prekindergarten initiative, are examined by evaluators. These evaluators visit about half of the programs every year.

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MAINE

Two-Year Kindergarten (permissive establishment of public four-year-old programs)

The State Early Elementary Advisory Board was involved in developing legislation for two-year kindergartens. The measure passed in 1983. Department of Education statutory language encourages school administrative units to place an increased emphasis on instruction and curriculum for all children ages four to nine. Districts are not required to offer prekindergarten, but they are reimbursed if they do. The state Board of Education has been actively promoting the prekindergarten program, resulting in an increase in the number of districts offering programs for four-year-olds.

State Funding: $1,300,000 (1997–98) [Note: Data for 1998–99 are not available, but it is likely that funding increased since three or four additional schools were offering programs.]

Number of Children Served: 654 (1997–98) [Note: Data for 1998–99 are not available, but it is likely that enrollment increased, since three or four additional schools were offering programs.]

Targeting Criteria: The initiative serves children who are four years old by October 15. Enrollment is on a first-come, first-served basis.

Method for Distributing Funds: School districts are reimbursed after the second year of program operation through a state aid formula. The amount a district receives depends on average daily attendance and the poverty level of the district.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Only public schools are eligible to operate programs.

Hours of Operation: Some programs offer classes four days a week, with the fifth day reserved for home visits. Other programs operate five days per week. At a minimum, programs must operate two to two-and-one-half hours per day.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 10:1 (recommended)

Maximum Class Size: No state prekindergarten regulations.

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have an elementary teaching certificate or a birth to five-year-olds specialist certificate, which is in the process of being finalized.

Monitoring: Programs are not monitored under the state prekindergarten initiative itself. However, monitoring of programs is provided through other systems—child care licensing and child development services (the state special education system for children birth to age five).

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State-Funded Head Start Model

Since 1985, the state has appropriated funds to increase the number of children served by Head Start and equalize Head Start services across the state. Head Start programs are strongly encouraged to form partnerships with child care programs to enable them to offer a full-day schedule. The state has helped foster the partnerships by combining its Head Start and child care offices into a single agency and by giving priority to partnerships in distributing child care funds.

State Funding: $2,329,000 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 424 (1998–99)

Targeting Criteria: Children who are between three years old and kindergarten entry and have family incomes at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible.

Method for Distributing Funds: Funds are allocated based on the percentage of eligible children served by Head Start in each county. Counties with a greater number of children who are eligible for, but unserved by, the federal Head Start program receive larger grants. Local grantees are required to provide a 20 percent match for state funds.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Federal Head Start agencies are eligible to receive funds.

Hours of Operation: Federal Head Start regulations require that programs operate a minimum of three-and-one-half hours per day, four days a week, 128 days a year. The state encourages Head Start programs to coordinate with child care programs to offer a full-day schedule.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 17:2 (for three-year-olds); 10:1 (for four-year-olds)

Maximum Class Size: 17 (for three-year-olds); 20 (for four-year-olds)

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have at least a CDA credential or a college degree with a specialization in early childhood education.

Monitoring: Grantees must meet state reporting requirements for their use of funds. Each grantee receives an annual visit from a state contract officer to ensure that the contract requirements are being met. However, the state does not conduct extensive compliance monitoring. The state has an agreement with the federal regional Head Start office to have that office monitor state slots.

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MARYLAND

Extended Elementary Education Program (EEEP)

In 1979, the General Assembly appropriated funds based on a successful pilot program authorized by a state Board of Education resolution. The program, originally targeted to at-risk children in Baltimore City and Prince George's County, has now expanded to include 249 sites in selected schools statewide. The goal of the initiative is to provide learning experiences to help at-risk children develop and maintain the basic skills necessary for successful school performance. The Maryland General Assembly recently passed the $62 million School Accountability Funds for Excellence (SAFE) legislation targeting at-risk students from prekindergarten through 12th grade. The SAFE legislation includes an additional $4.4 million per year for EEEP through FY 2003, at which time the effects of programs will be evaluated to determine future funding.

State Funding: $19,263,000 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 9,880 (1998–99)

Targeting Criteria: Each local school system's enrollment policies and practices determine the eligibility of four-year-old children in accordance with state guidelines. These guidelines ensure that those children with the greatest educational needs are enrolled in the program. Children who have limited English proficiency, are homeless, or had prior enrollment in a Head Start or Even Start program are automatically eligible. In addition, children who have been referred from other school system programs or local agencies, who have health conditions, or who face adverse home and family conditions are given priority to participate in this program. If additional spaces are available, eligible children outside the school attendance areas may be enrolled.

Method for Distributing Funds: School funding is provided on a formula basis. The funding process is non-competitive. Since FY 1998, responsibility for determining the allocation of funding has shifted from the state Department of Education to the legislature, which now makes specific allocations to local school systems.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Only public schools may apply for direct funding. Non-profit child care agencies, private schools, and universities are eligible to operate programs through subgrants from the public schools (but subcontracts are used on only a very limited basis).

Hours of Operation: Programs operate for a minimum of five days a week. Most programs operate for a half-day only. The state is encouraging programs to use recent expansion funding to provide extended hours.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 10:1

Maximum Class Size: 20

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have certification in early childhood education.

Monitoring: The state requires that programs go through a self-appraisal and validation process based on the Maryland Standards for Implementing Quality Early Learning Programs, which may also be done in conjunction with NAEYC accreditation. EEEP programs conduct a self-appraisal at least once every three

years, which the state monitors by collecting data. The state does not make regular site visits, but it will visit a program in response to complaints. EEEP prekindergarten programs in child care centers are monitored by local school systems and by the state's child care licensing agency.

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MASSACHUSETTS

Community Partnerships for Children

The state's current prekindergarten initiative grew out of the Chapter 188 early childhood program, which was established under the School Improvement Acts of 1985. In FY 1993, the state provided additional funding for prekindergarten, revised the existing initiative, and renamed it the Community Partnerships for Children (CPC) program. This initiative aims to increase access, affordability, quality, and comprehensiveness of early childhood programs for three- and four-year old children of working families. One of the main priorities of the initiative is to enhance collaboration among community programs and services for preschool-age children and their families. The state requires that all participating prekindergarten programs seek NAEYC accreditation, and that all family child care providers have or seek a CDA credential.

State Funding: $78,500,000 (1998-99)

Number of Children Served: 18,100 (1998-99)

Targeting Criteria: Eligible children must be between age two years, nine months and the age of kindergarten eligibility in the school district and have working parents (either full- or part-time) earning under 100 percent of state median income. (A disabled parent is not required to work for their child to qualify.) Local programs may set eligibility priorities within these criteria. All programs must serve, or be willing to serve, children with disabilities (regardless of whether the parent is employed).

Method for Distributing Funds: Funds are distributed through competitive grants, with priority given to cities and towns with high concentrations of low-income working families. Once a community is awarded a grant, it can thereafter receive continuing grants on a non-competitive basis. The community can also apply for additional funding beyond its existing funding level.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Public schools, Head Start agencies, non-profit child care agencies, and for-profit child care agencies may receive direct funding to operate programs (if acting as the lead agency in the community) or may subcontract with the community's lead agency. Family child care homes and community agencies are also eligible to operate programs through subgrants.

Hours of Operation: Programs operate for a minimum of three days a week, two and one-half hours per day. At least one-third of the children participating in the initiative must be provided with full-day classes.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 10:1 for child care; 9:1 for Head Start; 15:2 for public schools; 6:1 for family child care

Maximum Class Size: 20 for child care; 18 for Head Start; 15 for public schools; 6 for family child care

Teacher Qualifications: Teacher qualifications depend on the setting and may range from a CDA credential to teacher certification in early childhood education.

Monitoring: Local community councils are responsible for assessing their community's needs, monitoring the progress of local programs toward meeting those needs, and overseeing quality. Progress toward accreditation is monitored closely as a measure of success. The Department of Education sponsors "think tanks" for community councils and local partnership program staff to focus on issues of mutual concern such as needs assessment and subcontracting procedures. Local programs are required to do an annual evaluation of their own programs. The state is also conducting state fiscal and programmatic reviews on a sample of programs each year.

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State-Funded Head Start Model

Since 1988, the state has appropriated funds for Head Start. The majority of these funds support salary enhancement supplements to each grantee in the state. The remainder supports expansion of Head Start to serve more children.

State Funding: $6,900,000 (1998-99)

Number of Children Served: 450 (1998-99) [Note: State funding for the Head Start model includes $5.1 million for teacher salary enhancements and $1.8 million to enable programs to serve additional children. The enrollment figure provided here includes only those children whose participation is supported by the funds that are designated to increase the number of slots, and not children who may benefit from the salary enhancements.]

Targeting Criteria: Children who are between three years old and kindergarten entry and have family incomes at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible.

Method for Distributing Funds: The state distributes its funds for teacher salary supplements to all Head Start grantees on a formula basis. It provides expansion funds to programs using competitive grants based on need.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Federal Head Start agencies are eligible to receive funds.

Hours of Operation: Federal Head Start regulations require that programs operate a minimum of three and one-half hours per day, four days a week, 128 days a year.

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Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 17:2 (for three-year-olds); 10:1 (for four-year-olds)

Maximum Class Size: 17 (for three-year-olds); 20 (for four-year-olds)

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have at least a CDA credential or a college degree with a specialization in early childhood education.

Monitoring: Programs are monitored by the federal Head Start regional office.

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MICHIGAN

Michigan School Readiness Program

The initiative began in 1985 as a pilot program. Its goal is to serve at-risk prekindergarten-age children who are not eligible for, or who are eligible for but not served by, Head Start, ensuring school readiness for four-year-olds at risk of school failure. The initiative provides funding to schools through formula aid and to private non-profit agencies through competitive grants.

State Funding: $67,083,000 (1998–99) [Note: This figure does not include funding for evaluation and administration.]

Number of Children Served: 21,638 (1998–99)

Targeting Criteria: Children who are four years old (but not yet five) on or before December 1 of the program year and who have at least two risk factors are eligible. There are twenty-four established risk factors related to school failure. A minimum of 50 percent of children served must be living in families with low incomes, which is defined as eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch or for the state's Unified Child Care subsidy program.

Method for Distributing Funds: The state distributes 81 percent of the funds to schools on a formula basis and the remaining 19 percent to agencies other than schools on a competitive basis. (The portion of funding distributed directly to the schools may be subcontracted to non-school agencies as well, at the school district's discretion.) The funding per child is the same for both the formula grants to the schools and the competitive grants to other agencies.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Public schools, Head Start, non-profit child care agencies, private schools, and community agencies (including mental health agencies) may receive direct funding or may subcontract to operate programs. In-home providers may operate programs through subgrants.

Hours of Operation: Minimum hours are generally four days a week, two and one-half hours a day, for the classroom model. Almost all children are in programs operating on this schedule. A handful of programs operate five days per week, or two days a week for five hours each day.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 8:1

Maximum Class Size: 18

Teacher Qualifications: A teacher in a public school prekindergarten program must have either certification in early childhood education or a college degree with specialization in early childhood education. A teacher in a program funded through the competitive grants can also qualify with an associate degree in early childhood education or a CDA credential.

Monitoring: Each program is required to submit a written report annually including a comprehensive self-assessment using the "Program Quality Assessment." State Early Childhood Education staff monitor competitive grant-funded programs for fiscal and programmatic purposes at least once in each three-year funding cycle. About 10 percent of school district programs are monitored each year. High/Scope, through its new training program, will offer training on assessment.

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MINNESOTA

Learning Readiness

The initiative, which began in 1991, attempts to provide all eligible children with adequate opportunities to participate in child development programs that enable them to enter school with the necessary skills and behaviors, as well as the family stability needed for them to progress and flourish. The initiative funds over 22 types of services, including half-day prekindergarten, parent and child kindergarten preparation, collaboration with early childhood special education, transportation assistance, home visiting, take-home kits for children/parents, supports for parents of children in existing programs, contracts with Head Start center-based or home-based programs, programming with family child care providers, summer programs, consultants for children with specific needs in early childhood programs, supplementary services for children in prekindergarten and child care, links with family literacy programs, and interpreter assistance. The particular services a given community chooses to offer will depend on the most pressing needs in that community. The program is operating in all but two of the state's 355 districts. Children are prioritized for services based on the results of a developmental screening.

State Funding: $10,300,000 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 46,889 (1997–98) [Note: Learning Readiness funds a range of early childhood services, rather than a standard core program. Therefore, for many of the children included in this count, the initiative supports only

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the supplementary services, such as health or social service consultations, they are receiving rather than regularly scheduled prekindergarten classes. Data for 1998–99 are not available, but the state estimated that enrollment remained approximately the same or decreased slightly.]

Targeting Criteria: Eligibility for the initiative is not limited to particular populations, but there are some children who receive priority. Every child receives a screening between ages three and a half and four, and then has the opportunity to participate in learning readiness services. Priority is given to those children with greater needs—children who are identified as at-risk, who just miss the income cutoff for Head Start eligibility, who have developmental delays but do not qualify for early childhood special education, or children who have other family circumstances that may place them at risk of school failure. Local districts determine priorities within the framework provided by the state and consistent with the statute's provisions that children with the highest need be given priority for services.

Method for Distributing Funds: Entitlement aid is provided to districts based upon a formula that has two components: 1) the number of four-year-olds in the district and 2) the number of pupils in grades K–12 in the district receiving free or reduced-price lunch. Funding is provided as part of the community education funding stream, but dollars can only be used for Learning Readiness, and not any other programs within the school district. The funds are provided on a non-competitive basis, with districts receiving a predetermined amount based on the formula, but districts still have to apply for the funds and describe how they will use them; if a district decides not to apply for the funds—as two of the state's 355 districts have done—the money is redistributed among those districts providing services.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Only public schools may receive direct funding. Head Start agencies, non-profit child care agencies, for-profit child care agencies, family child care homes, private schools, charter schools, and in-home providers are eligible to operate programs though subgrants with the public schools.

Hours of Operation: When offered by a district, prekindergarten classes generally operate on a half-day schedule.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 10:1

Maximum Class Size: 20

Teacher Qualifications: Teacher certification in early childhood education or in parent education is required for the coordinator of Learning Readiness programs within a district (or multi-district region operating under a joint plan). The qualifications for teachers in individual programs differ depending on the setting (for example, teachers in Head Start are required to have at least a CDA credential or a college degree with a specialization in early childhood education).

Monitoring: The state requires that districts submit a plan every other year and an annual report. The state does not have regular on-site monitoring, but it does conduct some informal visits. The state is also developing a peer-to-peer program to help examine the quality of programs.

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State-Funded Head Start Model

Since 1988, the legislature has appropriated state funds for Head Start to expand the program and allow more children to participate.

State Funding: $18,750,000 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 3,135 (1998–99)

Targeting Criteria: Children who are between three years old and kindergarten entry and have family incomes at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible.

Method for Distributing Funds: The majority of funds are distributed on a non-competitive basis using a formula related to several factors, including unmet need. The funds are provided to each of the 34 federal Head Start grantees. At the discretion of the Department of Children, Families and Learning, up to 11 percent of the funds may be set aside for competitive grants for innovative collaboration projects. (In addition, competitive funding is available for services to children ages birth to three.)

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Federal Head Start agencies are eligible to receive funds.

Hours of Operation: Federal Head Start regulations require that programs operate a minimum of three and one-half hours per day, four days a week, 128 days a year.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 17:2 (for three-year-olds); 10:1 (for four-year-olds)

Maximum Class Size: 17 (for three-year-olds); 20 (for four-year-olds)

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have at least a CDA credential or a college degree with a specialization in early childhood education.

Monitoring: The state makes yearly site visits. The state has an agreement with the federal regional Head Start office to coordinate the visits by state monitors with visits by the federal monitors, which occur at least once every three years. The state monitors accompany the federal monitors. The state also sends questionnaires to programs on an ongoing basis asking about partnerships, technology, responses to changes in the welfare program, waiting lists, and grant reporting for competitive awards.

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MISSOURI

Missouri Preschool Project (Early Childhood Development, Education and Care Fund Grant)

Legislation passed in 1998 established an Early Childhood Development, Education and Care Fund, which includes support for prekindergarten programs (in addition to supporting certificates for low-income families to purchase early childhood development care and education; increased rates of child care subsidy reimbursement for accredited programs; and certificates for low-income families with children under age three who care for their children at home). The ECDEC is funded by revenues from the Gaming Commission Fund. The state will make the prekindergarten grants available to local schools and community groups beginning in 1999. Although public schools must submit applications for the new grants, the initiative requires the involvement of other community leaders and organizations. The goal of the initiative is to provide high quality prekindergarten programs to help children prepare for school. Prekindergarten programs must show annual progress toward Missouri or NAEYC Accreditation and must complete accreditation by the end of the three-year grant period.

State Funding: $9,200,000 (1999-2000) [Note: The state's prekindergarten initiative is new. Communities have applied for funds, and programs will begin operating in September 1999. This is the state's projected funding for the first year of the Preschool Project.]

Number of Children Served: Not applicable [Note: Programs will not begin operating until September 1999.]

Targeting Criteria: Three- and four-year-olds are eligible. Programs will be encouraged to serve children from low-income families and children with special needs.

Method for Distributing Funds: Funds will be distributed on a competitive basis. Priority will be given to applicants that provide new or expanding programs to increase capacity, target geographic areas of high need for children, involve children with special needs, and serve a high concentration of low-income children. School districts are required to use a minimum of 10 percent of the grant award to support and/or provide services to licensed prekindergarten programs in the community for children ages three and four.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Only public schools may apply for direct funding. Head Start agencies, non-profit child care agencies, and community agencies are eligible to operate programs through subgrants from the public schools.

Hours of Operation: The programs must operate for a minimum of three hours a day, five days a week (or may operate four days a week if the fifth day is used for visits with the family).

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 10:1

Maximum Class Size: 20

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers in public school programs must have an early childhood teacher certification or an early childhood special education teacher certification with a "payment exception" granted for individuals holding a four-year college degree in child development. For programs operating in settings other than the public schools, a teacher must have at least a CDA, a one-year certificate of proficiency in child development or child care, or a two-year associate's degree in child care/education. Teachers holding less than teacher certification are required to complete a minimum of six college hours during the fiscal year to work toward achieving an associate's or bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a related field. Costs of up to $800 per person for tuition, required books, and other expenses associated with the courses will be approved.

Monitoring: Public school sites must be licensed by the Bureau of Safety and Child Care Licensing within one year of receiving a grant, and programs operating outside the public school must currently be licensed. In addition, programs, which must complete accreditation by the end of the three-year grant period, will receive some monitoring and technical assistance through the Missouri or NAEYC accreditation program. Programs will be required to submit an annual report. The state does not require regular on-site visits, but monitors from the Department of Education plan to visit as many districts as possible.

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NEBRASKA

Early Childhood Projects

Legislation established the early childhood projects in 1990, and funding was provided starting in 1992. The intent of the projects is to provide comprehensive child development and parent education. The projects are collaborative efforts between schools and other agencies. The services offered by each project vary, with, for example, some offering prekindergarten classes and others providing home visits.

State Funding: $500,000 (1998-99)

Number of Children Served: 275 (1998-99)

Targeting Criteria: Children are eligible from birth to the age of school entrance (five years old by October 15). Seventy percent of the project funds are targeted to serve children who are eligible for Head Start but not receiving services, who have family incomes below 150 percent of the federal poverty index, who were premature or born with low birth weight, who have a primary language other than English, who have teenage parents or parents who have not completed high school, whose parents have a disability, and/or who are clients of the Department of Social Services.

Method for Distributing Funds: Competitive grants, for which any school district may apply, are used to distribute funds. Currently 10 projects are funded. Once funded, the grant is continuous from year to year, provided the project continues meeting the grant requirements.

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Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Only public schools and multi-county Educational Service Units may apply for direct funding. Head Start agencies, non-profit child care agencies, and other community agencies are eligible to operate programs through subgrants from the schools.

Hours of Operation: The number of days per week and hours per day are decided locally; however, center-based programs must provide at least a half-day program.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 10:1

Maximum Class Size: 20

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers serving children in a home- or center-based setting must have Nebraska certification with endorsement in early childhood education or a college degree with specialization in early childhood education. If the early childhood program also serves children with disabilities below age five, a teacher who holds a Nebraska Teaching Certificate with an endorsement appropriate for teaching prekindergarten children with disabilities may teach, provided he/she acquires at least six credit hours each year toward an Early Childhood Endorsement.

Monitoring: The state makes on-site visits annually.

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NEW HAMPSHIRE

New Hampshire Head Start–State Collaboration (State-Funded Head Start Model)

Since 1988, the state legislature has appropriated funds to maintain staff salaries at competitive levels and support the transportation system in Head Start programs. The annual appropriation has remained at a constant amount for approximately five years.

State Funding: $230,000 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: Not applicable. [Note: State funding is used to supplement all Head Start programs, not to support individual slots.]

Targeting Criteria: Children who are between three years old and kindergarten entry and have family incomes at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible.

Method for Distributing Funds: Funds are allocated through the Fuel Assistance grant to Community Action Program agencies for their Head Start program. Funding is not competitive; all federal Head Start grantees receive state funds and total state funding is divided among the grantees according to the number of children served by each.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Federal Head Start agencies are eligible to receive funds.

Hours of Operation: Federal Head Start regulations require that programs operate a minimum of three-and-one-half hours per day, four days per week, 128 days per year.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 17:2 (for three-year-olds); 10:1 (for four-year-olds)

Maximum Class Size: 17 (for three-year-olds); 20 (for four-year-olds)

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have at least a CDA credential or a college degree with a specialization in early childhood education.

Monitoring: The federal Head Start office is responsible for monitoring programs. The state is not involved with these monitoring efforts.

For more information, contact:

Ann Ringling
NH Head Start-State Collaboration Director
Department of Health and Human Services
Child Development Bureau
129 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301-6505

Phone: 603-271-4454
Fax: 603-271-7982
Email: *aringlin@dhhs.state.nh.us*

NEW JERSEY

Early Childhood Program Aid

Early Childhood Program Aid was established by the Comprehensive Educational Improvement Act of 1996, the state's school funding law enacted in response to the school finance equity lawsuit *Abbott v. Burke*. This act established Early Childhood Program Aid for the lowest wealth school districts in the state to extend part-day kindergartens to full-day for five-year-olds, and offer half-day prekindergarten to three- and four-year-olds. The 28 low-income urban districts that brought the lawsuit against the state (referred to as the "Abbott districts") are required to provide prekindergarten for all three- and four-year-olds by September 1999. Other districts eligible for the aid are required to provide prekindergarten for all four-year-olds by 2001–02.

State Funding: $70,000,000 (1998–99) [Note: The state supports prekindergarten as part of an initiative that also provides funding for extending half-day kindergartens to a full day. The total amount of funding for the initiative is $303 million. The figure provided here is a CDF estimate of how much of this total is used for prekindergarten. It is based on the assumption that about one-quarter of this total was spent on prekindergarten, since about one-quarter of the total number of children served by the initiative are in prekindergarten (the initiative provides funding for 8,197 children in prekindergarten versus 27,262 children attending full-day kindergarten). However, the proportion of funding used for prekindergarten may not necessarily be the same as the proportion of children in kindergarten; while the amount spent per child for prekindergarten and kindergarten is the same within a district, the amount per child differs from district to district, depending on the percentage of the district's children who are low-income.]

Number of Children Served: 8,197 (1998–99)

Targeting Criteria: Three- and four-year-olds who reside in one of the special needs districts (districts with high concentrations of low-income children, as defined by poverty level) are eligible for

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prekindergarten supported by Early Childhood Program Aid. The 28 low-income urban districts are required to provide prekindergarten for all of their three- and four-year-olds by September 1999, and the remaining districts eligible to receive aid are required to serve all four-year-olds by 2001–02. (There were 136 eligible districts for 1998–99. The ECPA also supports full-day kindergarten for five-year-olds in these districts.)

Method for Distributing Funds: Funds are distributed on a non-competitive basis to school districts with high populations of students with low family incomes. The amount of funding each district receives is calculated based on the district's total student enrollment and the percentage of children who are living in low-income families.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Public schools, child care centers, and Head Start agencies are eligible to operate programs.

Hours of Operation: Programs operate for five days a week, providing services for two-and-one-half to five hours a day.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 15:2 for schools in Abbott districts; 20:3 for child care programs in Abbott districts; 25:1 for programs in other districts.

Maximum Class Size: 15 for schools in Abbott districts; 20 for child care programs in Abbott districts; 25 for programs in other districts.

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers in public schools must have their teaching certificate. (The certificate currently available is for N[nursery]–8; the state is developing a new early childhood certificate for N–3). Teachers in community child care programs may qualify if they receive a CDA credential within a year, and work toward completing their bachelor's degree over a period of six years.

Monitoring: Monitoring of prekindergarten programs in public schools is conducted as part of the Department of Education's process for monitoring an entire school. The Department would not be responsible for monitoring an agency other than the school if the school subcontracts.

For more information, contact:

Susan Saravalli Ph.D.
Acting Director
Office of Educational Support Services
Department of Education
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Phone: 609-292-5935
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Email: *ssaraval@doe.state.nj.us*

State-Funded Head Start Model

Since 1988, the state has appropriated funds to help federal Head Start programs offer extended-day programs and to provide comprehensive Head Start-like services in community-based child care programs.

State Funding: $1,400,000 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 500 (1998–99)

Targeting Criteria: Three- and four-year-olds whose family income is below the federal poverty level and whose parents need extended-day services due to work, or training or education leading to employment, are eligible.

Method for Distributing Funds: Competitive grants are used to distribute funds.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Federal Head Start agencies and other child care agencies receive direct funding to operate programs.

Hours of Operation: Programs are required to operate for a minimum of six and one-half hours a day.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 17:2 (for three-year-olds) and 10:1 (for four-year-olds) in federal Head Start agencies; 10:1 (for three-year-olds) and 12:1 (for four-year-olds) in child care agencies.

Maximum Class Size: 17 (for three-year-olds) and 20 (for four-year-olds) in federal Head Start agencies; 20:1 (for three- and four-year-olds) in child care agencies.

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers in federal Head Start agencies must have at least a CDA credential or a college degree with a specialization in early childhood education. Teachers in child care agencies must have at least a Certified Child Care Professional Certificate, in accordance with child care licensing guidelines.

Monitoring: Contract compliance and monitoring are carried out by the Division of Family Development.

For more information, contact:

George Kobil
Administrative Analyst
Division of Family Development
Department of Human Services
Capital Center, CN 717
Trenton, NJ 08625-0717
Phone: 609-631-4965
Fax: 609-588-3369

NEW MEXICO

Child Development Program

In 1991, the legislature appropriated funds for collaborative child development programs in communities to provide quality early care and education to young children (ages birth to five years) and their families. Programs are expected to meet the developmental needs of children with appropriate practices and materials in schools, community agencies, and in the home. Services may include child care and development, parent education and family support, home visiting, health screenings, and/or referrals to related services. Programs are collaboratively planned in communities to address and fill gaps between and among other categorically funded programs. By emphasizing program flexibility and community planning, the state aims to encourage efficient use of state resources and attract community resources.

The initiative funds nine integrated and non-integrated prekindergarten programs (for children who are developing typically, who have special needs, and who are homeless); five home visiting programs; three programs for babies of teen parents; three family/provider resource and support programs; and one hospital-based program providing follow-up for at-risk infants.

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State Funding: $1,300,000 (1998-99)

Number of Children Served: 1,333 (1997-98) [Note: Data on the number of children served in 1998-99 are not available. The figure provided here is the number of children enrolled in 1997-98, when funding was $816,000.]

Targeting Criteria: Children from birth to age five (and their parents) are eligible. The state does not target the initiative to any particular population, but instead allows individual programs to determine who they will serve.

Method for Distributing Funds: Contracts are awarded based on a competitive application process, subject to state appropriations. Locations with high numbers of young children and few available early childhood program spaces receive preference. The state targets funds using county figures on how many licensed spaces are available (so that, for example, the state may fund a more rural community lacking capacity). Most grants are between $20,000 and $90,000, depending on a community's needs. A typical grant is about $40,000. The state usually funds programs on a three-year cycle, with funding renewed provided that the program is operating well. When additional funds are available, the state issues a new RFP and funds are distributed to new sites not already receiving funds.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Public schools, non-profit and for-profit child care agencies, Head Start programs, in-home providers, community colleges, state universities, and community agencies can operate programs. (Family child care providers and private schools are also permitted to receive funding, but none currently do.)

Hours of Operation: Hours vary, depending on community needs.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 12:1 (in accordance with child care licensing guidelines)

Maximum Class Size: No state prekindergarten regulations.

Teacher Qualifications: The state examines program proposals to determine whether teachers have sufficient early childhood preparation, preferring that they have a CDA credential, but not requiring teachers to have any particular qualifications.

Monitoring: Programs are monitored on-site once or twice per year. All programs do a self assessment using the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale or the New Mexico Guide for Preschool. Program reviews and program outcomes are submitted in annual final reports to the Office of Child Development.

For more information, contact:

Judy Paiz
Office of Child Development
Children, Youth and Families Department
PO Drawer 5160
PERA Building, Room 215
Santa Fe, NM 87502-5160
Phone: 505-827-7689
Fax: 505-827-9957

State-Funded Head Start Model

The legislature began appropriating state funding for Head Start in FY 1999. The funds are targeted to serve children of families participating in New Mexico Works, the state welfare program. The funds are used to expand programs.

State Funding: $5,000,000 (1998-99)

Number of Children Served: 1,300 (1998-99) [Note: Figure is an estimate.]

Targeting Criteria: The funds are targeted to serve children of families participating in New Mexico Works, the state's welfare program. Children of families who are participating in the welfare-to-work program are eligible to participate in the initiative, even if their families' incomes exceed 100 percent of poverty.

Method for Distributing Funds: A competitive process is used for selecting grantees. Programs submit proposals and a committee of readers reviews the proposals, taking into account factors such as the program's ability to offer high quality prekindergarten and the need for additional Head Start slots in that area. About nine of the thirty-five federal Head Start grantees in New Mexico are receiving state funds.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Federal Head Start agencies are eligible to receive funds.

Hours of Operation: Federal Head Start regulations require that programs operate a minimum of three-and-one-half hours per day, four days a week, 128 days a year. The state requires programs receiving state Head Start funds to provide extended hours through arrangements with child care and other programs.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 17:2 (for three-year-olds); 10:1 (for four-year-olds)

Maximum Class Size: 17 (for three-year-olds); 20 (for four-year-olds)

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have at least a CDA credential or a college degree with a specialization in early childhood education.

Monitoring: The Head Start collaboration coordinator does an administrative review of all programs to verify documentation showing that programs are serving eligible children and families. Programs provide attendance reports for monthly reimbursement and monthly one-page program reports. The state has three child care specialists who conduct on-site reviews in order to observe classrooms. The state is working to establish a written agreement on monitoring with the federal regional Head Start office to allow child care specialists to attend the federal Head Start monitoring review as observers.

For more information, contact:

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Department of Children, Youth and Families
Child Care Services Bureau
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Santa Fe, NM 87502-5160
Phone: 505-827-9952
Fax: 505-827-7361

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NEW YORK

New York State Universal Prekindergarten Program

In 1997, the legislature established the universal program as part of an education improvement bill. The state plans to make sufficient funding available by 2002 to provide access to prekindergarten for all four-year-olds in the state. Each school district applying for funding must form a Prekindergarten Policy Advisory Board appointed by the superintendent.

State Funding: $67,000,000 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 18,906 (1998–99)

Targeting Criteria: Children who are four years old by December 1, or a date until December 31 that is established by the local school district, are eligible. For 1998–99, all children who were not served by other state-funded prekindergarten programs were eligible for the program. Local communities decided what criteria to use in selecting age-eligible children for enrollment. Many districts used indicators of economic disadvantage, while some districts enrolled children on a first-come, first-served basis. Beginning in school year 1999–2000, preference must be given to economically disadvantaged children, until the program becomes fully phased-in, or universal.

Method for Distributing Funds: School districts receive funding based on a needs-related formula. It does not involve a competitive grant process since districts are not competing with each other for funds, but rather are permitted to apply for the amount of funding available to the district as determined by the formula. Criteria such as the wealth ratio of the district and other economic factors are used to determine when a district becomes eligible to apply for funds and its per child funding allocation. For 1998–99, 125 out of the state's 705 districts were eligible to apply, and by 2002, all districts will be eligible to apply.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Only public schools may receive direct funding. Head Start agencies, non-profit child care agencies, for profit child care agencies, family child care homes, private schools, prekindergarten special education providers, and community agencies are eligible to operate programs through contracts with the public schools. (A minimum of 10 percent of funds must be contracted by the public schools to eligible agencies for the instructional program.)

Hours of Operation: Programs operate five days a week for a minimum of two and one-half hours per day.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 18:2 [Note: For a class size of 18, there must be one teacher and one paraprofessional. For a class size of 19 or 20, there must be one teacher and two assistants.]

Maximum Class Size: 20

Teacher Qualifications: In public schools, teachers must be certified in elementary education or dually certified in elementary education and another specialty area. In contracted agencies, teachers without certification are currently allowed to qualify, provided they meet the staff qualification requirements of those agencies and are supervised by a certified teacher. By 2001–02, teachers in contracted agencies must meet the same requirements as those in public schools.

Monitoring: State staff provide fiscal monitoring annually and program monitoring. However, the law does not have any requirements for regular site visits.

For more information, contact:

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NY State Education Department
Child, Family and Community Services Team
EBA 381
Albany, NY 12234
Phone: 518-474-5807
Fax: 518-486-7290

New York State 'Experimental' Prekindergarten Program

In 1966, the legislature established the experimental prekindergarten program to provide developmentally appropriate programs to economically disadvantaged three- and four-year-olds. The initiative, created at the same time as Head Start, is similar to the federal program in its emphasis on comprehensive services.

State Funding: $50,200,000 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 19,458 (1996–97) [Note: This is the most recent enrollment total available. Spending in 1996–97 was the same as the current level.]

Targeting Criteria: The initiative serves children whose families are economically disadvantaged as defined by eligibility to receive TANF, free/reduced-price lunch, food stamps, Medicaid, or unemployment or disability compensation. It is primarily targeted to four-year-olds, although a few programs have been granted special permission to serve three-year-olds as well.

Method for Distributing Funds: Funding is distributed on a formula basis, with a minimum required local match of 11 percent. Funds are received by ninety eight school districts and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) consortiums to serve economically disadvantaged children. (The districts were originally selected by legislative decision thirty years ago when the program started.)

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Public schools and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) may operate programs.

Hours of Operation: Programs operate for a minimum of two and one half hours per day. A few programs operate for four days a week with one day reserved for home visits and staff and parent development programs, but the state is trying to encourage these programs to operate five days a week.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 18:2 [Note: For a class size of 18, there must be one teacher and one paraprofessional. For a class size of 19 or 20, there must be one teacher and two assistants.]

Maximum Class Size: 20

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must be certified in elementary education or dually certified in elementary education and another specialty area.

Monitoring: State staff provide fiscal monitoring annually and program monitoring. However, the law not does have any requirements for regular site visits.

For more information, contact:

Margretta Reid Fairweather
NY State Education Department
Child, Family and Community Services Team
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NORTH CAROLINA

Smart Start

Smart Start, launched in 1993, is a comprehensive public-private initiative to help children enter school healthy and ready to succeed. The initiative supports prekindergarten services, as well as providing funding for child care subsidies, parent and health education, and early intervention and preventive health screenings. Local planning teams make decisions about how to use their Smart Start funds. The initiative is now operating in all 100 of the state's counties.

State Funding: Data are not available. [Note: Total state funding for Smart Start was $140 million in 1998-99, but since the initiative supports a range of services, including not only prekindergarten but also child care subsidies, quality enhancements, parent education, and health screenings, it cannot be determined how much of the total was spent on prekindergarten.]

Number of Children Served: Data are not available. [Note: The state is unable to provide enrollment data because funds are not only used to provide program slots for individual children, but also for enhancing overall early childhood services in a community, from which all children in the community may benefit. In addition, children may be served by multiple programs funded by Smart Start.]

Targeting Criteria: Local communities determine which families and children they will serve.

Method for Distributing Funds: Currently, all 100 counties in the state are receiving funds. Communities must submit a plan indicating how they will use the funds to serve young children and families. The North Carolina Partnership for Children decides whether to approve the plan and adjusts the community's allocation based on the plan. Each community must use at least 30 percent of its funds for child care subsidies, and of the total funds provided to all local partnerships for direct services, 70 percent must be used for activities and programs that are related to increasing availability, improving quality, or promoting greater access to child care and early education programs and activities.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Local partnership councils, which are responsible for developing plans for using the funds and for overseeing local programs, receive direct funding, and then award grants for services. Agencies eligible to provide services include community organizations, child care centers, family child care homes, Head Start programs, public school districts, and community colleges.

Hours of Operation: Hours vary, depending on the type of programs or services provided. There are no minimum hours of operation required.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: No state prekindergarten regulations.

Maximum Class Size: No state prekindergarten regulations.

Teacher Qualifications: No state prekindergarten regulations.

Monitoring: Local partnerships monitor expenditures and program outcomes. There is also monitoring at the state level, carried out by the North Carolina Partnership for Children. NC Partnership reviews expense reports monthly and monitors programs and program outcomes through regular visits. Counties are generally visited at least twice per funding cycle, with those facing difficulties receiving more frequent visits. The state auditor provides fiscal monitoring as well.

For more information, contact:

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Executive Director
North Carolina Partnership for Children
1100 Wake Forest Road, Suite 300
Raleigh, NC 27604
Phone: 919-821-7999
Fax: 919-821-1021

OHIO

Public School Preschool

Based on the success of pilot programs that had begun in 1986, the legislature established the Public School Preschool in 1990. The Ohio Head Start Association and state Department of Education worked together with advocates to convince the legislature of the benefits of early childhood education. The initiative's goals are school readiness and social competence. In 1994, the state adopted Head Start Performance Standards for its public school prekindergarten programs, requiring them to follow the Head Start model in providing comprehensive, quality prekindergarten. Between the federally and state-supported Head Start program (see below) and Public School Preschool, Ohio is trying to ensure that all low-income three- and four-year-old children in the state have access to high quality prekindergarten education in either Head Start, public school prekindergarten, or child care.

State Funding: $17,900,000 (1998-99)

Number of Children Served: 7,773 (1998-99)

Targeting Criteria: The initiative serves three- and four-year-olds whose family incomes are below 185 percent of the poverty level.

Method for Distributing Funds: Originally, grantees were selected by a competitive process. Funding for continuing programs is now provided through a non-competitive allocation. The legislation mandates that each program receiving funds must be provided with at least the same amount of funds received in the previous year, and if there are additional dollars available, these are awarded as cost-of-living increases. For the last several years, this has been mainly a continuation program, with no dollars for expansion.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Only public schools may apply for direct funding. Head Start agencies and non-profit child care agencies are eligible to operate programs with subgrants from the public schools.

Hours of Operation: Programs are required to provide a minimum of 448 hours of service per year, which is equivalent to two-and-one-half hours a day, five days a week for the school year.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 10:1

Maximum Class Size: 20

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Teacher Qualifications: Teachers in programs operated by the public schools must have teacher certification in early childhood education or an Early Childhood Specialist license (a bachelor's degree with specialization in early childhood), a valid Ohio Prekindergarten Associate Certificate (a two-year degree), or a valid Ohio K–Primary Certificate with at least four courses in child development. Teachers in programs subcontracted to Head Start agencies may also qualify with a CDA credential.

Monitoring: In addition to two annual on-site reviews required to meet licensing standards, the state has initiated a strategy for monitoring Public School Preschool and Head Start programs. The Department of Education trains, certifies, and contracts with Certified Program Reviewers (CPR) to conduct or participate in on-site reviews. A Facilitated Self Review, a Program Improvement Review, or a Data and Grant Verification may be conducted. The type of review assigned to each program is determined through a data-driven process and based upon program need.

For more information, contact:

Jane Wiechel
Director
Division of Early Childhood Education
Department of Education
65 South Front Street, Room 309
Columbus, OH 43215-4183

Phone: 614-466-0224
Fax: 614-728-2338
Email: *ece_weichel@al.ode.ohio.gov*

Ohio Head Start

The state began providing funds to supplement the federal Head Start program in 1990. With the state's significant investment in Head Start, combined with its public preschool program (see above), Ohio is able to provide nearly all low-income three- and four-year-old children with access to a quality prekindergarten experience.

State Funding: $92,562,977 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 22,072 (1998–99)

Targeting Criteria: The initiative serves three- and four-year-olds with family incomes below 100 percent of the federal poverty level. Beginning in 1999–2000, Ohio will allow local programs receiving state Head Start funds to request waivers to serve children in families with incomes up to 125 percent of poverty.

Method for Distributing Funds: Funding is allocated through non-competitive grants for continuing programs and competitive grants for expansion. A prospective grantee must demonstrate management, staff, and fiscal capacity. State Head Start funds are provided to 53 out of the 54 Head Start grantees in the state, in addition to three agencies that do not receive federal Head Start grants.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Head Start agencies in addition to other agencies that meet Head Start Performance Standards are eligible to receive funds.

Hours of Operation: Federal Head Start regulations require that programs operate a minimum of three and one-half hours per day, four days a week, 128 days a year. Many programs provide extended hours by forming partnerships with child care agencies and using child care funds.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 17:2 (for three-year-olds); 10:1 (for four-year-olds)

Maximum Class Size: 17 (for three-year-olds); 20 (for four-year-olds)

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have at least a CDA credential or a college degree with a specialization in early childhood education.

Monitoring: In addition to two annual on-site reviews required to meet licensing standards, the state has initiated a strategy for monitoring Public School Preschool and Head Start programs. The Department of Education trains, certifies, and contracts with Certified Program Reviewers (CPR) to conduct or participate in on-site reviews. A Facilitated Self Review, a Program Improvement Review, a Data and Grant Verification, or a joint review with federal monitors may be conducted. The type of review assigned to each program is determined through a data-driven process and based upon program need.

For more information, contact:

Jane Wiechel
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65 South Front Street, Room 309
Columbus, OH 43215-4183

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OKLAHOMA

Early Childhood Four-Year-Old Program

In 1980, funds were appropriated by legislation for the education of four-year-olds in public schools. One factor that led to the creation of the program was research demonstrating the long-term beneficial effects of early childhood education. When initially established, the program was targeted to at-risk children, but legislation passed in July 1998 opened the program to all four-year-olds.

State Funding: $36,500,708 (1998–99) [Note: The state funding total reported here does not include additional funds districts receive based on the number of children in prekindergarten who have special needs, limited English proficiency, etc. The state was unable to provide information about the amount of these additional funds.]

Number of Children Served: 16,678 (1998–99)

Targeting Criteria: Prior to 1998–99, children had to be four years old by September 1 and meet Head Start income guidelines to participate (a family income at or below 100 percent of poverty). Now, all four-year-olds are eligible to participate (although participation is still voluntary, not mandatory). The change in eligibility requirements went into effect July 1, 1998.

Method for Distributing Funds: Funding is provided on a formula basis to the local schools. Before the 1998 legislative change, schools received funding based on the number of children that were income eligible and attending the program, at a rate of .5 full-time equivalent slots (FTEs). Under the new legislation, schools receive funding for all children who attend the program, at increased rates of .7 FTEs for half-day students and 1.3 FTEs for children attending for the full school day.

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Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Only public schools may receive direct funding. Head Start agencies, non-profit child care agencies, and for-profit child care agencies are eligible to operate programs with subgrants from the public schools.

Hours of Operation: Programs operate five days a week for a minimum of two-and-one-half hours a day. Programs have the option of offering a six-hour program, and receive a higher reimbursement rate if they choose this option.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 10:1

Maximum Class Size: 20

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have certification in early childhood education or a special early childhood certificate, which is awarded to teachers who have earned a CDA, have five years teaching experience in Head Start, and have passed the early childhood certification test.

Monitoring: Department of Education regional accreditation officers provide fiscal and program monitoring yearly to school district programs. However, these monitoring visits are to assess the school as a whole, and not specific to prekindergarten. Local school districts are responsible for monitoring programs with which they are subcontracting.

For more information, contact:

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Early Childhood/Family Education
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Head Start State-Appropriated Funds (State-Funded Head Start Model)

Since 1993, the state legislature has appropriated funds for Head Start. The original purpose was to help Community Action Agencies (CAAs) match federal funds for Head Start. Currently, the purposes of the funds are to extend the day and year, enhance existing services, and expand programs to serve more and/or younger children.

State Funding: $3,316,918 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: Data are not available. [Note: Enrollment through the combined state and federal Head Start components was 11,259 for 1998–99. Data on enrollment supported by the state component alone are not available for 1998–99.]

Targeting Criteria: Children who are between three years old and kindergarten entry and have family incomes at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible.

Method for Distributing Funds: Grants are awarded to Community Action Agencies (CAAs) on a formula basis. A grantee's award amount depends on its federally funded enrollment and the county poverty level for its service area. Non-CAA Head Start grantees may receive funds through a CAA. Currently, 20 of 21 federal grantees in the state receive state funds. Agencies receiving state funds must submit a workplan each year.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Federal Head Start agencies are eligible to receive funds to operate programs.

Hours of Operation: Federal Head Start regulations require that programs operate a minimum of three and one-half hours per day, four days a week, 128 days a year. Approximately 20 percent of children attend four days a week. Most children (about 80 percent) attend five days a week. The hours vary among programs; about 50 percent or more of children are still in half-day programs.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 17:2 (for three-year-olds); 10:1 (for four-year-olds)

Maximum Class Size: 17 (for three-year-olds); 20 (for four-year-olds)

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have at least a CDA credential or a college degree with a specialization in early childhood education.

Monitoring: The state Department of Commerce visits about one-third of the programs each year to monitor how state funds are used. However, this monitoring primarily concerns fiscal and administrative compliance, rather than the quality of the children's classroom experience. The Department of Commerce supports some training and technical assistance efforts to help programs prepare for federal review, which occurs once every three years.

For more information, contact:

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OREGON

Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten (State-Funded Head Start Model)

The legislature established the program in 1987. The Head Start Association took the lead in advocating for the legislation. The goal is to provide comprehensive services to three- and four-year-old children from low-income families through the adoption of federal Head Start Performance Standards for the state-funded program. The state makes funds available to federal Head Start grantees as well as other grantees that agree to follow Head Start Performance Standards.

State Funding: $16,272,167 (1998–99) [Note: The funding level indicated here includes $11,272,167 in continuation funds and half of the $10 million provided for expansion over the 1997–99 biennium.]

Number of Children Served: 3,064 (1998–99) [Note: This total includes 1,701 children who participated for a full school year and an additional 1,363 children who were able to be served by February 1, 1999 as a result of the expansion funding, but who did not necessarily participate for the full year. In 1999–2000, the state expects to maintain the current number of slots (3,064) and serve all of the children for the full school year.]

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Targeting Criteria: Children who are between three years old and kindergarten entry and have family incomes at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible.

Method for Distributing Funds: The state awards competitive grants to applicants who can meet federal Head Start Performance Standards and show a need for prekindergarten programs through a community needs assessment. Most of the Head Start programs in the state are receiving both federal and state funds (only about five programs are receiving only state dollars). Programs apply annually for a continuing grant. The state provides funds for the initiative in every community in the state (all 36 counties).

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Head Start agencies, non-profit child care agencies, community colleges, state universities, education service districts, and community agencies are eligible to receive direct funding to operate programs.

Hours of Operation: Hours of operation vary by site. The majority of programs operate four days a week, but a few operate five days a week. Programs generally operate on a part-day schedule, but a few are offering full-working-day hours by coordinating with other funding sources.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 17:2 (for three-year-olds); 10:1 (for four-year-olds)

Maximum Class Size: 17 (for three-year-olds); 20 (for four-year-olds)

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have at least a CDA credential or a college degree with a specialization in early childhood education.

Monitoring: State staff conduct on-site program reviews together with federal regional Head Start staff once every three years.

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PENNSYLVANIA

Education Aid for Kindergarten for Four-Year-Olds

The state allows school districts to set the minimum entry age for kindergarten at age four. However, attendance is not compulsory (Pennsylvania does not require school attendance until age eight).

State Funding: $5,700,000 (1997-98) [Note: The state's initiative allows school districts to use the state education aid they receive to serve prekindergarten-age children. The spending figure indicated here is the state's estimate of how much of state education funds districts use for this purpose. However, no state funds are targeted specifically for prekindergarten and the total amount of state education aid a district receives is largely unaffected by prekindergarten enrollment. As a result, a district that chooses to use some of its state education funds to serve prekindergarten-age children would, in effect, be shifting funds that would otherwise be used for elementary and secondary students.]

Number of Children Served: 2,979 (1997-98)

Targeting Criteria: Children who are four years old are eligible.

Method for Distributing Funds: Districts receive state education aid for K-12 on a formula basis and may use these funds to serve prekindergarten-age children.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Only public schools are eligible to operate programs.

Hours of Operation: Programs must operate five days a week for a minimum of two-and-one-half hours a day.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: No state prekindergarten regulations.

Maximum Class Size: No state prekindergarten regulations.

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have certification in elementary education.

Monitoring: The state has no monitoring requirements.

For more information, contact:

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RHODE ISLAND

Early Childhood Investment Fund[127]

In 1997, within a larger school improvement bill, the legislature established state aid for local school districts to design early childhood programs in response to family needs. Districts may offer prekindergarten, before- and after-school care, extended-day kindergarten, parent education and family support programs through family centers, and/or reduce class sizes in the elementary grades. In 1998, the legislature amended the bill (effective FY 1999 and thereafter) to establish a 3 percent set aside for early childhood and require school districts to submit an early childhood plan to the Department of Education (DOE) for approval. Funds may be used for direct services and to purchase materials and equipment for children. While the state allows districts to use their funds for prekindergarten, no district is using them for this purpose yet.

State Funding: Not applicable. [Note: The state's initiative provided $5.3 million in funds for 1998-99, which communities could use for a range of early childhood-related programs, including prekindergarten. However, no communities used the funds to provide prekindergarten, instead primarily using the funds to extend half-day kindergartens to full-day.]

Number of Children Served: No districts are using the funds to serve preschool-age children.

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Targeting Criteria: Children from birth to age 10 and their families are eligible. Priority is given to families most in need, with need determined locally.

Method for Distributing Funds: State aid is provided to local school districts on a formula basis.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Only public schools may receive direct funding. Head Start agencies, non-profit child care agencies, for-profit child care agencies, and private schools are eligible to operate programs with subgrants from the public schools.

Hours of Operation: Decisions about the operating schedule are made at the local level.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 10:1 (recommended)

Maximum Class Size: 20 (recommended)

Teacher Qualifications: The Department of Education recommends that teachers have a bachelor's degree in early childhood education/child development.

Monitoring: The state has no monitoring policy specific to its prekindergarten initiative.

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State-Funded Head Start Model

Since 1986, the legislature has appropriated funds for Head Start. The funds are used to help meet the match requirements for federal Head Start funds. Head Start programs use state funds to increase the number of slots available. The state funds can also be used by programs to match federal funds for Medicaid, which supports programs in providing targeted case management services.

State Funding: $1,965,000 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 400 (1998–99) [Note: In addition to supporting slots for additional children, the state also uses its funds to provide quality enhancements for federally funded slots ($359,859 of the total funding is used for this purpose). The enrollment total reported here includes state-funded slots only, and does not include children who benefit from the state's investment in quality.]

Targeting Criteria: Children who are between three years old and kindergarten entry and have family incomes at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible. The criteria are applied the same way as with the federal Head Start program. Priority is given to children at risk for abuse or neglect, children whose parents are moving from welfare to work, and other children at highest risk.

Method for Distributing Funds: Grants are awarded directly to each of the eight federal Head Start grantees based on the total number of children served. The amount provided to each program was established in the law, based on the program's capacity to serve additional children and the need for greater capacity, as determined by waiting lists and other factors.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Federal Head Start agencies are eligible to receive funds.

Hours of Operation: Federal Head Start regulations require that programs operate a minimum of three and one-half hours per day, four days a week, 128 days a year.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 17:2 (for three-year-olds); 10:1 (for four-year-olds)

Maximum Class Size: 17 (for three-year-olds); 20 (for four-year-olds)

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have at least a CDA or a college degree in early childhood education.

Monitoring: Programs submit quarterly reports to the state Department of Human Services on progress toward meeting program-defined objectives. State staff do not participate in monitoring efforts by the federal regional Head Start office.

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SOUTH CAROLINA

Early Childhood Program (Half-Day Child Development Programs)

The legislature established the program in 1984 as part of the Education Improvement Act to address academic deficiencies in four-year-old children and prepare them for kindergarten and first grade. The legislation was renewed in 1993.

State Funding: $22,356,688 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 16,000 (1998–99)

Targeting Criteria: Children must be four years old on or before September 1 of the program year. Priority is given to students with defined disabilities or English as a second language. Each district screens children and then enrolls the most needy children (up to the number for which the district has received funding). The DIAL-R screening instrument, which indicates whether a child has academic deficiencies, is used in most districts. Districts may use other criteria such as eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch, single parent status, the age of the mother, or the number of other siblings.

Method for Distributing Funds: Funding is provided to school districts on a formula basis. The state Department of Education calculates each district's allocation based on the number of students scoring "not ready" as determined by the most recent first grade readiness data or its equivalent and the total funding available.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Only public schools are eligible to receive direct funding. Head Start agencies may operate programs with subgrants from the public schools.

Hours of Operation: All programs are half-day (two and one-half hours) and operate a minimum of five days a week.

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Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 10:1

Maximum Class Size: 20

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have certification in early childhood education or a college degree with specialization in early childhood education.

Monitoring: The Department of Education monitoring office provides staff to conduct on-site fiscal and program monitoring visits once a year. These visits are part of a review of the school as a whole, but they include staff who are trained specifically in early childhood.

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TENNESSEE

Tennessee Early Childhood Education Pilot Program

In 1996, the legislature established a pilot prekindergarten program. Funds were appropriated for the pilots in 1998. The purpose of the program is to serve low-income three- and four-year-old children and others at risk because of disabilities, abuse, or neglect; to promote collaborative efforts to expand quality services; and to address the needs of Families First (welfare reform) parents who require quality care and education for their prekindergarten-age children.

State Funding: $3,100,000 (1998-99)

Number of Children Served: 600 (1998-99)

Targeting Criteria: Three- and four-year-old children who are eligible for Head Start but are not being served due to inadequate capacity may enroll. Priority is given to children whose families are participating in Families First, the state's welfare reform program.

Method for Distributing Funds: Funds are allocated through a competitive grant process. A contract is established with those programs that are selected. The programs do not get money upfront, but instead submit invoices for reimbursement. The contract must be renewed every year, but it is expected that successful programs will be able to continue receiving funds without having to reapply for a grant.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Public schools, Head Start agencies, non-profit child care agencies, and higher education institutions are eligible to receive direct funding to operate programs.

Hours of Operation: Programs are required to operate five days per week, for a minimum of five-and-one-half hours per day. Programs are also required to offer extended hours as needed, using child care funds.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 10:1

Maximum Class Size: 20

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have certification in prekindergarten through grade three.

Monitoring: Each year, the state makes two visits—one announced and one unannounced—to monitor programs for compliance with child care standards, which are common standards adopted by the school board that apply to all early childhood programs. The state is also in the process of hiring an early childhood director to monitor the progress of the projects.

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TEXAS

Public School Prekindergarten

In 1984, the prekindergarten initiative was mandated by the legislature to serve high-risk children. The goal was to break the debilitating cycle of costly remediation and school failure in later grades by building a solid foundation of school successes among preschool-age children. Districts must offer prekindergarten classes if they have at least 15 eligible four-year-olds. (Districts may also serve eligible three-year-olds, but they are not required to serve them.)

State Funding: $235,000,000 (1998-99)

Number of Children Served: 123,859 (1998-99)

Targeting Criteria: Children must be at least three years old on or before September 1 of the program year, and either unable to speak or comprehend English, educationally disadvantaged (i.e., eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program), or homeless. All districts must offer a program if they have 15 or more eligible four-year-old children. Districts may, but are not required to, offer prekindergarten to eligible three-year-olds.

Method for Distributing Funds: Funds are distributed on the basis of a school funding formula (the funding method is the same as for K-12).

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Only public schools may receive direct funding. Head Start agencies, non-profit child care agencies, and for-profit child care agencies are eligible to operate programs with subgrants from the public schools.

Hours of Operation: Programs operate five days per week for a minimum of three hours per day.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: No state prekindergarten regulations.

Maximum Class Size: No state prekindergarten regulations.

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have certification in elementary education with endorsement in early childhood education or kindergarten, or a college degree with specialization in early childhood education.

Monitoring: The state Board of Education no longer has the authority to monitor programs. The Texas Education Agency may examine prekindergarten programs as part of the process of accrediting schools as a whole, but these monitoring efforts are not focused on prekindergarten.

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VERMONT

Early Education Initiative

In 1987, the legislature established the program in response to concern that some preschool-aged children were "falling between the cracks" and not ready for kindergarten. The goals were to ensure kindergarten success for children, increase parent involvement, and promote community collaboration in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of high quality early childhood services. The initiative provides grants to about 60 percent of the state's communities. The grant must be collaboratively developed at the community level, bringing together parents, schools, child care, Head Start, and other agencies and community representatives. Communities determine what early childhood supports to provide with their grants, depending on their needs. In some communities, the grant is the primary source of funding for their prekindergarten program, while in other communities state funding constitutes only a small portion of the program's budget and is used to fill in gaps in the program.

State Funding: $1,315,000 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 1,097 (1997–98) [Note: Data for 1998–99 are not available, but enrollment will probably remain the same or decrease slightly since funding in 1998–99 was the same as in 1997–98.]

Targeting Criteria: The initiative primarily serves children who are three and four years old, but younger children may also be served as space permits. To qualify, a child must have risk factors such as: developmental delay (of over six months), experience of abuse and neglect, limited English proficiency, social isolation, exposure to adverse environmental conditions such as violence, family substance abuse, unsafe housing or neighborhood conditions, behavioral disorders, or family income below 200 percent of federal poverty guidelines.

Method for Distributing Funds: The program is funded through competitive grants based on the needs of the community served by the program and the degree of collaboration with other community providers. The original grants were distributed on a competitive basis, but they now operate on a continuation grant cycle. Due to level funding, there has been no new open competition since the initial competition.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Public schools, Head Start agencies, non-profit child care agencies, for-profit child care agencies, parent-child centers, social service agencies, and child care resource and referral agencies are eligible to receive direct funding to operate programs.

Hours of Operation: The majority of programs operate one to two days a week, but some operate three to four days a week, and a small number operate five days a week. Most programs are half day.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 10:1

Maximum Class Size: 18

Teacher Qualifications: Law requires "qualified staff," which means the teacher must have the highest qualifications required in the environment of that particular grantee (for example, a teacher in a Head Start program must have at least a CDA credential or a college degree with a specialization in early childhood education, while a teacher in a public school program must be certified in early childhood education).

Monitoring: Site visits are made to each program annually and all programs make an annual report of activities. Programs must also have some form of external review every three years (Head Start On-Site Program Review Instrument [OSPRI], accreditation, etc.). Programs have the opportunity to be assessed through a peer review process. This process used to be required, but it is no longer mandatory, since many programs are already undergoing an accreditation process.

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VIRGINIA

Virginia Preschool Initiative

The program began in 1995 as a legislative initiative to serve at-risk four-year-old children who are eligible for, but unserved by, Head Start or Title I. The purpose of the state prekindergarten program is to reduce disparities among young children upon school entry and to reduce or eliminate risk factors that lead to academic failure. To receive funding, localities must submit a plan for a quality prekindergarten program that offers parent involvement opportunities, comprehensive child health services, comprehensive social services, and transportation. Localities are also expected to coordinate the initiative with other early education programs.

State Funding: $23,500,000 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 5,811 (1998–99)

Targeting Criteria: Children must be four years old by September 30 of the program year and have factors indicating they are at risk. Each program determines the particular educational and/or economic factors it will use to identify children at risk.

Method for Distributing Funds: The state provides funding to school districts on a non-competitive basis. The state determines the maximum amount for which a district can apply, based on the number of children eligible for free lunch in the district who are not already being served by Head Start or Title I. The funding formula provides for 60 percent of those children not served by Title I or Head Start in a locality to be served by the state prekindergarten initiative.

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Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Public schools and local government entities are eligible to receive direct funding to operate programs. Head Start agencies, non-profit child care agencies, for-profit child care agencies, private schools, and community agencies can receive subgrants from the public schools and/or local government entities to operate programs.

Hours of Operation: Programs operate on a school-day schedule five days per week.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 8:1

Maximum Class Size: 16

Teacher Qualifications: The teacher must have training in early childhood development. The state recommends that, at a minimum, teaching staff have credentials, certifications, and/or postsecondary course work in early childhood education. The law requires "qualified staff" which means the teacher must have the highest qualifications required in the environment of that particular grantee (for example, a CDA or a college degree with specialization in early childhood education if the program is in a Head Start center; teacher certification in early childhood if it is in a public school).

Monitoring: Programs turn in an interim report on teacher and aide qualifications, the number of children participating, and other information. They also submit a final report that indicates the health and social services offered. These reports must be signed by the superintendent. The state does not provide any on-site monitoring.

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WASHINGTON

Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)

In 1985, the legislature established the ECEAP program with support from the Washington Business Roundtable, which made early childhood education reform its top priority after a review of economic development and workforce issues. The goal of the initiative is to assist eligible children with educational, social, health, nutritional, and cultural development to enhance their opportunity for success in school. The requirements for the initiative closely follow the example set by Head Start Performance Standards. With the implementation of Work First, the welfare reform program, the state is attempting to develop more prekindergarten sites that are integrated with child care to offer full-day programs that meet the needs of working parents.

State Funding: $28,897,592 (1998-99)

Number of Children Served: 8,098 (1998-99)

Targeting Criteria: Four-year-olds (and with specific approval, a small number of three-year-olds) are eligible. Family income must be at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level. Priority is given to children at risk of school failure for reasons such as low family income, child abuse or neglect, homelessness, developmental disabilities and/or special needs, or limited English proficiency, with individual providers determining how to apply these criteria.

Method for Distributing Funds: Programs receiving funds were initially selected through a competitive grant process. The award amount for each program is negotiated on a cost-per-child basis, with additional funding available to cover training, parent empowerment activities, one-time costs, and longitudinal study costs. Funds are provided through a biennial contract. Programs can have their contracts renewed without entering a rebidding process, although this is contingent on their meeting the requirements of the initiative.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Public schools, non-profit and for-profit child care programs, Head Start programs, local governments, tribal organizations, community colleges, universities, and other community-based organizations can receive direct funding to operate programs. Family child care homes may subcontract to operate programs.

Hours of Operation: The minimum hours of operation are three days per week, with a minimum of 10 hours per week in activities.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 6:1

Maximum Class Size: 18 (24 in school setting)

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have a four-year college degree in early childhood education or child development and a minimum of two years of successful work experience in a prekindergarten, child care, or kindergarten setting.

Monitoring: A process of self-assessment is completed by staff, administrators, and parents at the local level each year. A report is then submitted to the state office and used in on-site program reviews, which are conducted every four years. Monthly "desk top" reviews (reviews without on-site monitoring) are based on monthly reports.

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Head Start State Match Program (State-Funded Head Start Model)

Since 1968, the state has appropriated funding to help programs meet local match requirements for federal Head Start.

State Funding: $470,000 (1998-99)

Number of Children Served: Data are not available. [Note: State funding is used to match federal funding for each of the children enrolled in the initiative, rather than to support additional slots.]

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Targeting Criteria: Children who are between three years old and kindergarten entry and have family incomes at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible.

Method for Distributing Funds: Funds are distributed on a cost-per-child basis, with the amount provided to each grantee depending on the number of children it serves.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Federal Head Start agencies are eligible to receive funds.

Hours of Operation: Federal Head Start regulations require that programs operate a minimum of three-and-one-half hours per day, four days a week, 128 days a year.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 17:2 (for three-year-olds); 10:1 (for four-year-olds)

Maximum Class Size: 17 (for three-year-olds); 20 (for four-year-olds)

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have at least a CDA credential or a college degree with a specialization in early childhood education.

Monitoring: Monitoring is the responsibility of the federal Head Start office. The state does not conduct any additional monitoring efforts.

For more information, contact:

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WEST VIRGINIA

Public School Early Childhood Education

The state school code was revised in 1983 to permit local county school boards to establish prekindergarten programs for children under age five.

State Funding: $6,232,702 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 5,656 (1998–99)

Targeting Criteria: Children who are under five years old and not eligible for kindergarten may participate. Eligibility determination is left to district discretion.

Method for Distributing Funds: Funds are distributed as part of the regular education aid that is provided for elementary and secondary education.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Only public schools are eligible to operate programs.

Hours of Operation: Decisions about the operating schedule are made at the local level.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: No state prekindergarten regulations.

Maximum Class Size: No state prekindergarten regulations.

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must be certified in elementary education.

Monitoring: Local school districts have responsibility for monitoring their programs.

For more information, contact:

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WISCONSIN

Four-Year-Old Kindergarten

State funds supported both four- and five-year-olds in kindergarten from 1898 to 1957. Funding for four-year-old kindergarten was repealed in 1957 and restored in 1985.

State Funding: $19,800,000 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 9,550 (1998–99)

Targeting Criteria: Children who are four years old by September 1 of the program year are eligible. If a district decides to offer the program, it must offer the program to all four-year-olds. However, prekindergarten is voluntary, and children are not required to attend.

Method for Distributing Funds: Districts receive a per pupil reimbursement based on a class membership count and a state aid equalization formula (the percentage of the cost that is state-funded varies by district). Districts receive reimbursement at 50 percent of the rate for a full-time pupil, unless the program operates for additional hours to provide outreach to children's primary caregivers, in which case, the district is instead reimbursed at 60 percent of the rate for a full-time pupil.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Only public schools are eligible to operate programs.

Hours of Operation: All programs are a half-day (two-and one-half to three hours), five days a week.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 10:1 (recommended)

Maximum Class Size: 20 (recommended)

Teacher Qualifications: The teacher must have a "Prek-3" certification (generally referred to as early childhood certification) or a "Prek-6" certification.

Monitoring: There is no state monitoring. Monitoring is conducted at the local level by school boards.

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State-Funded Head Start Model

Since 1991, the state has appropriated funds to expand Head Start. The purpose is to serve children who are eligible for the program but on waiting lists.

State Funding: $4,950,000 (1998–99)

Number of Children Served: 1,187 (1998–99)

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Targeting Criteria: Children who are between three years old and kindergarten entry and have family incomes at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible.

Method for Distributing Funds: All of the federal Head Start grantees receive some state funding. Originally, programs had to apply for funding and it was awarded based on need (as indicated by waiting lists, etc.), but the grantees and the amount provided to each grantee have not changed for four years because funding has remained level over that time.

Agencies Eligible to Operate Programs: Federal Head Start agencies are eligible to receive funds.

Hours of Operation: Federal Head Start regulations require that programs operate a minimum of three and one-half hours per day, four days a week, 128 days a year.

Quality Requirements

Child/Staff Ratios: 17:2 (for three-year-olds); 10:1 (for four-year-olds)

Maximum Class Size: 17 (for three-year-olds); 20 (for four-year-olds)

Teacher Qualifications: Teachers must have at least a CDA credential or a college degree with a specialization in early childhood education.

Monitoring: Programs receiving state funds must maintain records required by federal Head Start standards and submit these reports to the state Department of Public Instruction upon request. The federal Head Start office is responsible for regularly monitoring programs. The state does not provide any of its own on-site monitoring.

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ENDNOTES

Executive Summary

1. Catherine E. Snow, M. Susan Burns, and Peg Griffin, eds. National Research Council. (1998). *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

2. For example, a review of nine early intervention programs targeted to at-risk children found that the programs had positive impacts on children's emotional and cognitive development, educational performance, and health. (L.A. Karoly, et al. (1998). *Investing in Our Children: What We Know and Don't Know About the Costs and Benefits of Early Childhood Intervention*. RAND: Santa Monica, CA.) A study of the long-term impact of a quality prekindergarten program for low-income children found that after 27 years, each $1.00 invested saved over $7.00 by increasing the likelihood that children would be literate, employed, and enrolled in postsecondary education, and making them less likely to be school dropouts, dependent on welfare, or arrested for criminal activity or delinquency. (Schweinhart and Weikart. (1992). *Significant Benefits: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 27*. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Educational Research Foundation.)

3. Evaluations of state prekindergarten initiatives have been conducted in a number of states, including Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Maryland, Michigan, Texas and Washington.

4. This was when the Children's Defense Fund last conducted a comprehensive study of state prekindergarten initiatives.

5. The total amount of state funding in 1991–92 does not include funding for Hawaii's Preschool Open Doors, or for the school-based initiatives in Maine or Pennsylvania since the data are not available. Note that the amount of funding reported here differs from the amount originally reported by CDF in *First Steps, Promising Futures* (1994), because Texas has since provided revised funding data and because the 1991–92 total has been recalculated to exclude amounts identified as having been provided by sources other than the state, such as federal, local, or private sources.

6. The enrollment count for 1991–92 does not include children participating in the Florida's Migrant Prekindergarten, Hawaii's Preschool Open Doors, New Mexico's Child Development Program, Vermont's Early Education Initiative, the school-based initiatives in Maine, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, or the Head Start models in the District of Columbia and New Jersey, since the data are not available. Children participating in these initiatives are included in the enrollment total for 1998–99. However, most of the initiatives are serving a relatively small number of children.

7. Census Bureau. (June 1998). Current Population Reports (P20-500). *School enrollment-Social and economic characteristics of students: October 1996 (Update)*, Washington, DC.

8. Note that the way in which prekindergarten initiatives is defined for this report differs from the way in which it was defined for the Children's Defense Fund's 1991–92 report on state prekindergarten initiatives. This report uses a broader definition of prekindergarten initiatives. As a result, this report examines some state initiatives that existed in 1991–92 but that were not considered in our earlier report. These include initiatives in New Jersey, New Mexico, and Vermont, which provide grants that can be used to support a wide range of early childhood services rather than only a standard prekindergarten program with daily classes; initiatives in Maine, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, which have kindergarten initiatives extended to four-

year-olds; and Hawaii's Preschool Open Doors initiative, which provides funds directly to parents. In addition, state Head Start models, which were only briefly examined in the earlier report (and referred to there as "state Head Start supplements"), are considered in depth throughout this report to give a fuller picture of each state's prekindergarten activities.

9. While these states have initiatives that provide funding only to public schools, four of them have a second initiative that does fund agencies outside the public schools. Kansas, Maine and Wisconsin have Head Start models that provide state funding to federal Head Start agencies and New York has a Universal Prekindergarten initiative that requires participation by agencies other than public schools.

10. While Ohio's Public School Preschool provides only limited support to settings outside the public schools, the state makes a significant investment in a separate Head Start model, which provides funds to federal Head Start and other agencies.

Introduction

1. Catherine E. Snow, M. Susan Burns, and Peg Griffin, Eds. National Research Council. (1998). *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

2. Ellen S. Peisner-Feinberg, et al. (June 1999). *The Children of the Cost, Quality, and Outcomes Study Go to School*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina.

3. Robin Peth-Pierce. (1998). *NICHD Study of Early Child Care*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

4. March 1998 Current Population Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. Cited in The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (1999). *Kids Count Data Book 1999: State Profiles of Child Well-Being*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

5. Betty Hart, Ph.D., & Todd R. Risley, Ph.D. (1995). *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

6. Urban Institute and Child Trends. *Snapshots of America's Families: Children's Environment and Behavior, Reading and Telling Stories to Young Children*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

7. Pamela High, Marita Hopmann, et al. (April 1999). "Child Centered Literacy Orientation: A Form of Social Capital?" *Pediatrics*, Vol. 103, No. 4.

8. Arloc Sherman. (1994). *Wasting America's Future*. Washington, DC: Children's Defense Fund.

9. For example, a review of nine early intervention programs targeted to at-risk children found that the programs had positive impacts on children's emotional and cognitive development, educational performance, and health. (L.A. Karoly, et al. (1998). *Investing in Our Children: What We Know and Don't Know About the Costs and Benefits of Early Childhood Intervention*. RAND: Santa Monica, CA.) A study of the long-term impact of a quality prekindergarten program for low-income children found that after 27 years, each $1.00 invested saved over $7.00 by increasing the likelihood that children would be literate, employed, and enrolled in postsecondary education, and making them less likely to be school dropouts, dependent on welfare, or arrested for criminal activity or delinquency. (Schweinhart and Weikart. (1992). *Significant Benefits: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 27*. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Educational Research Foundation.)

10. This was when the Children's Defense Fund last conducted a comprehensive study of state prekindergarten initiatives.

11. The total amount of state funding in 1991–92 does not include funding for Hawaii's Preschool Open Doors, or for the school-based initiatives in Maine or Pennsylvania since the data are not available. Note that the amount of funding reported here differs from the amount originally reported by CDF in *First Steps, Promising Futures* (1994), because Texas has since provided revised funding data and because the 1991–92 total has been recalculated to exclude amounts identified as having been provided by sources other than the state, such as federal, local, or private sources.

12. The enrollment count for 1991–92 does not include children participating in the Florida's Migrant Prekindergarten, Hawai'i's Preschool Open Doors, New Mexico's Child Development Program, Vermont's Early Education Initiative, the school-based initiatives in Maine, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, or the Head Start models in the District of Columbia and New Jersey, since the data are not available. Children participating in these initiatives are included in the enrollment total for 1998–99. However, most of the initiatives are serving a relatively small number of children.

13. Eight of these states (Connecticut, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, and Rhode Island) were already investing in prekindergarten in 1991–92, but their new initiatives—which either replaced existing initiatives or were adopted as separate additional initiatives—represent an increased recognition of the importance of prekindergarten. Also note that the list of states with new initiatives does not include those that simply incorporated their prekindergarten initiatives into new block grants.

14. Census Bureau. (June 1998). Current Population Reports (P20-500). *School enrollment-Social and economic characteristics of students: October 1996 (Update)*. Washington, DC.

15. Note that the way in which prekindergarten initiatives is defined for this report differs from the way in which it was defined for the Children's Defense Fund's 1991–92 report on state prekindergarten initiatives. This report uses a broader definition of prekindergarten initiatives. As a result, this report examines some state initiatives that existed in 1991–92 but that were not considered in our earlier report. These include initiatives in New Jersey, New Mexico, and Vermont, which provide grants that can be used to support a wide range of early childhood services rather than only a standard prekindergarten program with daily classes; initiatives in Maine, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, which have kindergarten initiatives extended to four-year-olds; and Hawai'i's Preschool Open Doors initiative, which provides funds directly to parents. In addition, state Head Start models, which were only briefly examined in the earlier report (and referred to there as "state Head Start supplements"), are considered in depth throughout this report to give a fuller picture of each state's prekindergarten activities.

16. Data from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Compensatory Education Programs.

Chapter 1

17. The Alabama initiative analyzed in this report is the state's Preschool Collaboration Project that was established in 1996. The state may soon adopt a new prekindergarten initiative. Lawmakers have passed legislation to fund statewide prekindergarten education through proceeds from a new state lottery. Citizens will vote on the proposal on October 12, 1999.

18. In 1998, Illinois' prekindergarten initiative was combined into a block grant that also encompassed a prevention initiatives program for children birth to three and a parenting program. Since the state already had policies in place for its prekindergarten initiative, and continued to give priority to existing prekindergarten grantees, a distinct prekindergarten component could still be identified. It is this prekindergarten component, rather than the block grant as a whole, that is analyzed throughout this report.

19. Missouri's initiative is new and programs have not yet begun operating. Programs will begin serving children in September 1999.

20. In 1998–99, Rhode Island provided state funding for Head Start as well as for a new early childhood investment fund. This investment fund can be used to support prekindergarten, but no district is using it yet for this purpose, instead devoting much of the funds to support full-day kindergarten. In addition to these two initiatives, which are discussed in this report, the state is also in the process of developing a third initiative that, starting in FY 2000, will provide additional state funding for Head Start as well as comprehensive services in child care programs.

21. In addition to its Early Childhood Program, which is the initiative analyzed in this report, South Carolina also provides discretionary funds to school districts to serve children from age three through third grade. However, it is not known how much, if any, of this funding source is used by districts to support prekindergarten and therefore it is not considered in this report.

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22. In the remainder of the report, when the name of a state investing in both Head Start and a separate prekindergarten initiative is used, it refers to the state's separate prekindergarten initiative, *not* the state initiative that provides funds for Head Start, unless specifically indicated otherwise.

23. Kansas appropriated state funds for Head Start for the first time in 1998–99. However, these funds have not yet been distributed to programs.

24. A portion of the funds for New Jersey's state Head Start model are used to enable child care programs to provide some of the comprehensive services required under the Head Start model. However, these child care programs are not required to follow the complete set of Head Start Performance Standards.

Chapter 3

25. North Carolina's investment in Smart Start—$140 million in state funds—is not included in this total for 1998–99 funding or in the following analysis because it cannot be determined how much of these funds are used for prekindergarten.

26. New Jersey is spending $303 million on its Early Childhood Program Aid, but this figure includes spending for full-day kindergarten as well. It is estimated that about one-quarter of the total funding is used to provide prekindergarten.

27. Pennsylvania's initiative allows school districts to use the state education aid they receive to serve prekindergarten-age children, and the state estimates that districts are using a total of approximately $5.7 million for this purpose. However, no state funds are targeted specifically for prekindergarten and the total amount of state education aid a district receives is largely unaffected by prekindergarten enrollment. As a result, a district that chooses to use some of its state education funds to serve prekindergarten-age children would, in effect, be shifting funds that would otherwise be used for elementary and secondary students.

28. Per *pupil* spending differs from the per *capita* measure discussed earlier. The latter is a weighted measure used to assess each state's overall commitment in comparison to that of other states of different sizes. In contrast, state spending per *enrolled* child provides information about a state's commitment to provide sufficient resources for each child actually participating in the initiative.

29. Analyzing state funding per pupil for Head Start models is particularly difficult given that states use their funds for different purposes and collect data on their initiatives in different ways. A number of states use some or all of the state supplementary funds not for additional slots but rather to increase per pupil spending on children in the federally funded component so programs can better meet children's needs and provide a higher level of quality. Many states do not distinguish between children served through federal funds and those served through state funds. Given such differences, it may be misleading to compare per pupil spending among state Head Start models. Therefore, the amount of per pupil funding is not provided for each of the individual Head Start models and the models are not discussed more fully in this analysis.

30. For example, in New Mexico, the annual spending per child ranges from $18.50 for a program that uses the state funds for teacher training, a public awareness campaign, and program evaluation to between $3,500 and $4,000 for a program serving teenagers and their infants and toddlers; among the standard prekindergarten programs receiving state funds, the annual spending per pupil ranges from $320 to $3,400.

31. This analysis does not include New Jersey because 1998–99 was the first year of the initiative and per pupil spending will differ significantly in coming years. In future years, districts will continue to receive generally the same amount of state funding, with some adjustments for cost increases, as in 1998–99. However, the number of children served with those funds will increase significantly, since 28 low-income urban districts will be required to serve all three- and four-year-olds by September 1999, and the remaining districts receiving state funds will be required to serve all four-year-olds by 2001–02. State funding per pupil for 1998–99 is also difficult to calculate since a portion of funds were reserved by the districts and some funds were used to cover start-up costs.

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32. While a local match is not required, Maryland does not allow communities to use state funding available through a new education reform initiative (School Accountability Funds for Excellence, or SAFE) to supplant local funds. Local communities must maintain their existing level of funding support for prekindergarten programs.

33. Donald Wertlieb, Lawrence Neil Bailis, and Jennifer Kapuscik. (December 1996). *An Evaluation of the Massachusetts Community Partnerships for Children Program*. Medford, MA: Tufts University.

Chapter 4

34. Delaware, while continuing to distribute the majority of its funds through a competitive process, also plans to pilot a program in two communities where parents would receive funds directly. Families receiving funds directly would only be allowed to enroll their children in programs that meet Head Start Performance Standards. Yet, funds would be provided to each individual child to serve them in the eligible setting, rather than to support an entire classroom.

35. Kansas has not yet distributed it state Head Start funds, but it expects to use a competitive process and will likely give priority to state Early Head Start grantees.

Chapter 5

36. In Virginia, a local government body may also act as the lead agency that receives direct funds.

37. In the District of Columbia, there are federally funded Head Start programs operating in settings other than schools. However, these programs do not receive funds through the initiative discussed here. They may receive some funds from the city to enable them to offer extended hours, but this is through the child care program.

38. While data on the proportion of state-funded programs operated by outside agencies are not available, the proportion of *federally* funded Head Start programs (which will overlap to a large extent, but not entirely, with the programs supported by state prekindergarten initiatives) operated by agencies other than public schools is 82 percent.

39. While these states have initiatives that provide funding only to public schools, four of them have a second initiative that does fund agencies outside the public schools. Kansas, Maine, and Wisconsin have Head Start models that provide state funding to federal Head Start agencies and New York has a Universal Prekindergarten initiative that requires participation by agencies other than public schools.

40. While Ohio's Public School Preschool provides only limited support to settings outside the public schools, the state makes a significant investment in a separate Head Start model, which provides funds to federal Head Start and other agencies.

Chapter 6

41. These are tax-exempt bonds—loans—that the federal tax code allows certain public agencies to issue on behalf of non-profit organizations. A pooled bond is a single loan that finances more than one project in order to reduce the cost of issuing the bonds.

42. The average rate on the bond pool sold in October is 5.1 percent. This translates into about $625 per child per year in facilities costs, approximately 80 percent of which is being paid by the state. The balance—approximately $10 per child per month—is paid by providers from their operating income. This is the advantage of debt financing: the ability to spread the cost over the useful life of the asset in order to make the expense manageable.

Chapter 7

43. Census Bureau. (June 1998). Current Population Reports (P20-500). *School enrollment-Social and economic characteristics of students: October 1996 (Update)*. Washington, DC: Author.

44. Beginning in 1999–2000, Ohio will allow local programs receiving state Head Start funds to request waivers to serve children in families with incomes up to 125 percent of poverty.

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45. In Kentucky, children with disabilities are also eligible for prekindergarten, regardless of income.

46. In Texas, homeless children and children unable to speak or comprehend English are also eligible for prekindergarten, regardless of income.

47. See, for example, the discussion about the Chicago Child-Parent Center and Expansion Program in Karoly, et al. (1998). *Investing in Our Children: What We Know and Don't Know About the Costs and Benefits of Early Childhood Interventions*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

48. Nicholas Zill, Ruth Hubbell McKey, David Connell, Robert O'Brien, et al. (June 1998). *Head Start Program Performance Measures: Second Progress Report*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Research, Demonstration and Evaluation Branch and the Head Start Bureau.

49. In Kentucky, the only three-year-olds who are eligible are those with developmental disabilities or delays.

50. In Minnesota, children are eligible from age three-and-a-half; communities may serve younger children if they choose, but most do not have sufficient resources.

51. Vermont's initiative also serves children younger than three as space permits.

52. A few of New York's Experimental Prekindergarten programs are granted special permission to serve three-year-olds as well, but only a very small number of three-year-olds participate in these programs. The state strongly encourages programs to limit eligibility to four-year-olds.

53. While generally limited to four-year-olds, Washington's initiative also allows a small number of three-year-olds to participate with specific approval.

Chapter 8

54. Prekindergarten programs will have to meet the state's particular set of prekindergarten requirements in addition to the requirements of any other system of which that program is part. For example, public schools receiving state funds to operate prekindergarten programs will still have to follow any applicable state or local school codes; child care agencies will have to meet state child care licensing requirements; and Head Start programs will have to meet Head Start standards.

55. Sheri L. Azer and Darnae Eldred (1999). *Training Requirements in Child Care Licensing Regulations: 1999*. Boston, MA: The Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education. Included in these 31 states are both states that have prekindergarten initiatives and those that do not.

56. Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education at Wheelock College. Data as of June 1998. Based on data provided by Work/Family Directions, Inc. Included in these 33 states are both states that have prekindergarten initiatives and those that do not.

57. Anne Mitchell, Michelle Seligson, and Fern Marx. (1989). *Early Childhood Programs and the Public Schools: Between Promise and Practice*. Dover, MA: Auburn House Publishing Company. pp. 116–117.

58. New Jersey's state-funded Head Start model, in addition to providing funds to federal Head Start grantees that are required to meet Head Start Performance Standards, also provides funds to child care agencies to enable them to offer some of the comprehensive services provided by Head Start. These child care agencies are only required to meet child care licensing standards, not the full set of Head Start Performance Standards.

Chapter 9

59. These are recommendations included in NAEYC accreditation guidelines and the National Health and Safety Performance Standards developed by the American Public Health Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

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60. New Jersey requires that prekindergarten classes operated by schools in the 28 low-income urban (Abbott) districts be no greater than 15 students. However, child care programs in the Abbott districts may have up to 20 students. Programs in other districts may have classes of as many as 25 students.

61. While Washington sets the maximum class size at 18 for settings outside the public schools, programs within schools are allowed to have up to 24 children per class.

62. Hawaii only requires programs to meet the state's child care licensing standards, which do not regulate class size.

63. New Mexico only requires programs to meet the state's child care licensing standards, which do not regulate class size.

64. New Jersey requires that school-operated programs in Abbott districts have one teacher and one aide for every 15 students and that programs in licensed child care centers in Abbott districts have one teacher and two aides for every 20 students. Non-Abbott districts only require one teacher for a class of 25 students.

65. Deborah A. Phillips, Ed. (1987). *Quality in Child Care: What Does the Research Tell Us?* Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children; Marcy Whitebook, Carollee Howes, and Deborah Phillips. (1989). *National Child Care Staffing Study: Who Cares? Child Care Teachers and the Quality of Care in America*; Suzanne Helburn, et al. (1995). *Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers*. Denver, CO: University of Colorado; Sharon L. Kagan and Nancy E. Cohen. (1997). *Not By Chance: Creating an Early Care and Education System for America's Children*. New Haven, CT: Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy at Yale University.

66. Sharon L. Kagan and Nancy E. Cohen. (1997). *Not By Chance: Creating an Early Care and Education System for America's Children*. New Haven, CT: Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy at Yale University.

67. New Jersey's requirements only apply to teachers in the 28 Abbott districts.

68. Kansas allows teachers to qualify with certification in early childhood education or elementary education, and sets no requirements for teachers with only an elementary certificate to have coursework in early childhood. Pennsylvania and West Virginia require certification in elementary education, but did not provide information about whether this requirement includes coursework in early education.

69. Kentucky also allows teachers to qualify to lead a class if they hold a CDA credential or an associate's degree in early childhood or child development. However, teachers with these credentials must be under the curriculum supervision of a teacher with a college degree in child development or a related field.

70. Teachers in these states may have to meet higher requirements, depending on the setting. For example, in Iowa, teachers in public schools must have a teacher certification with early childhood education endorsement or a four-year college degree with a specialization in early childhood education. In Ohio, teachers in the public schools must, at a minimum, have an Ohio Prekindergarten Associate Certificate (a two-year degree) or an Ohio K–Primary Certificate with at least four courses in child development.

71. A CDA credential was the minimum requirement under federal Head Start standards as of 1998–99. However, these requirements were raised in the 1998 Head Start reauthorization. By September 30, 2003, at least half of all Head Start teachers in center-based programs across the country must have an associate, baccalaureate, or advanced degree in Early Childhood Education or a degree in a related field, with prekindergarten teaching experience.

72. These criteria for an appropriate curriculum were adapted from NAEYC guidelines.

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Chapter 10

73. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Head Start Bureau. *Head Start Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations (45 CFR Parts 1301, 1302, 1303, 1304 and Guidance, 1305, 1306, and 1308 and Guidance).* Washington, DC.

74. Meals and snacks are typically not paid through the state initiative itself, but rather through the federal Child and Adult Care Food Program or the federal School Lunch program, depending on the setting of the prekindergarten class.

75. Texas requires all children to have visual and hearing screenings, which are extremely important, but do not alone constitute comprehensive services.

76. Addition information about each state's new Children's Health Insurance Program is provided on the World Wide Web at http://www.childrensdefense.org/signup. This site includes links to state applications, phone and email addresses for state outreach coordinators, and flyers on states' CHIP and Medicaid programs.

Chapter 11

77. U. S. Department of Education (September 1994). *Strong Families, Strong Schools: Key Research Findings*. Located on the Web at http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/families/strong/key_research.html.

78. Judy A. Temple, Arthur J. Reynolds, Wendy T. Miedel. (November 1998). *Can Early Intervention Prevent High School Dropout? Evidence from the Chicago Child-Parent Centers*. University of Wisconsin-Madison: Institute for Research on Poverty.

79. Rebecca A. Marcon. "The 'D.C. Study': A Longitudinal Look at Children's Development and Achievement under Varying Educational and Familial Conditions," Paper presented at the Head Start Third National Research Conference, Washington, DC, June 20–23, 1996.

80. Hirokazu Yoshikawa. (Winter 1995). "Long Term Effects of Early Childhood Programs on Social Outcomes and Delinquency." *The Future of Children*, Volume 5, No. 3, pp. 51–75.

81. Robert G. St. Pierre, Jean I. Layzer, Helen V. Barnes. (Winter 1995). "Two-Generation Programs: Design, Cost and Short-Term Effectiveness." *The Future of Children*, Volume 5, No. 3, pp. 76–93.

82. Anita Lightburn. *Hall Neighborhood House Head Start Family Support Program Demonstration 1990–1993*, Paper presented at the Head Start Second National Research Conference, Washington, DC, November 4–7, 1993.

83. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Head Start Bureau. *Head Start Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations (45 CFR Parts 1301, 1302, 1303, 1304 and Guidance, 1305, 1306, and 1308 and Guidance)*. Washington, DC.

84. Susan A. Hicks, Kristi S. Lekies, and Mon Cochran. (January 1999). *Promising Practices: New York State Universal Prekindergarten*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Early Childhood Program. pp. 24–25.

85. For more details on how Head Start programs are helping parents move from welfare to work, see the CDF's 1998 publication, *Head Start: Helping Families Move From Welfare to Work*.

86. Belva Finlay with Helen Blank and Nicole Oxendine Poersch. (1998). *Head Start: Helping Families Move From Welfare to Work*. Washington, DC: Children's Defense Fund.

87. For New York's Experimental Prekindergarten, it is recommended that program staff make one home visit before the child begins participating in the program.

88. New Mexico's initiative provides some funds specifically for home visiting programs, but these are separate from the programs that primarily provide prekindergarten classes. Most of the prekindergarten programs hold parent-teacher meetings at the school, but they generally do not offer home visits.

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Chapter 12

89. National Association for the Education of Young Children. (May 1998). *Trends in State Accreditation Policies* (unpublished data).

90. South Carolina's monitoring is conducted as part of the annual review of the school as a whole, but the monitoring team includes staff specifically trained in early childhood education.

91. Until recently, Arizona had been doing annual site visits, although they were not required. It is not clear at this point whether the state will continue conducting these regular on-site reviews.

92. Beginning in FY 1999, Arizona will audit block grants every three years; it is not clear whether this will include site visits or only "desk-top" reviews.

93. Maine monitors programs to ensure that they are meeting state reporting requirements and has a contracting officer visit the programs annually. However, the state reports that it does not conduct extensive monitoring. Such monitoring is conducted by the federal Head Start bureau's regional office, in accordance with an agreement between the regional office and the state.

94. Oklahoma visits about one-third of the programs each year, but this monitoring primarily concerns fiscal and administrative compliance rather than the quality of services children are receiving in the classroom.

95. Rhode Island has programs submit quarterly reports, but the state is not involved in on-site visits.

Chapter 13

96. U.S. Department of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (December 1998). *Marital and Family Characteristics of the Labor Force from the March 1998 Current Population Survey*. Unpublished data.

97. In four of these states (Arizona, Maryland, Michigan, Wisconsin), there may be a limited number of programs providing school-day classes every other day rather than half-day classes five days a week, but the number of service hours per week would still be the same as for other programs. A district may choose to operate on such an alternative schedule because it enables the district to coordinate transportation for prekindergarten children with transportation for older children, and therefore is more cost-effective, or for other reasons. In New Jersey, there are some programs operating 5 hours a day, but the funding level is the same as for a two-and-one-half-hour program.

98. Connecticut, Hawaii, and Massachusetts provide state prekindergarten funds to support full-day programs, but they also require parents to pay fees on a sliding scale basis. Connecticut charges fees only for extended-day hours, if children are attending full-day programs. Hawaii, which provides full-day programs for all families, charges fees to all parents. Massachusetts charges fees to parents regardless of whether their children are attending part-day or full-day programs. For further discussion of fee policies for state prekindergarten initiatives, see Chapter 17.

99. While Hawaii's approach makes full-day programs available, it does this by providing parents with funds to purchase slots in child care programs that only have to meet child care licensing standards. It does not ensure an enriched educational experience for children.

100. While districts in Florida offering extended-day programs may earn additional FTEs toward meeting the minimum FTEs required for the district to receive its full allocation for the Early Intervention Prekindergarten Program, there is a cap on the amount of funding a district can receive.

101. States that coordinate their prekindergarten initiatives with other programs to offer a full-day option will generally charge families fees for the extended hours. For further discussion of state prekindergarten fee policies, see Chapter 17.

102. In some of these states, there may be one or two exceptions where programs are not operating on this schedule.

103. In addition, Missouri allows programs to hold classes four days a week instead of five, provided they use the fifth day for visits with families. However, since programs do not begin operating until September 1999, it is not yet known how many of them, if any, will use this option. For

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Rhode Island's Early Childhood Investment Fund, hours of operation are determined locally, so programs could choose to operate fewer than five days a week. However, at this time no communities are using state funds provided through this initiative for prekindergarten. In Ohio, programs are required to provide a minimum of 448 hours of service per year, which is equivalent to two-and-one-half hours per day, five days a week for the school year. The state did not provide data on whether some programs are meeting the minimum service hours requirements by operating longer hours for fewer days per week.

Chapter 14

104. Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. (1998). *Ancillary services to support welfare to work: National and state estimates* (Appendix A: Estimation of Need, Table 20). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Available on the Internet, http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/isp/ancillary/tbls.htm.

105. I. Rothman. (1998). *Getting to work: An organizer's guide to transportation equity*. Washington, DC: Center for Community Change.

106. New Jersey requires districts to provide transportation, but only for children who live beyond two-and-one-half miles from the school. Pennsylvania requires districts to provide transportation for prekindergarten children, but only if it is being provided to other children in the district.

107. In New Jersey, all districts receive state transportation aid for children living beyond two-and-one-half miles from the school. In Abbott districts, program funds may be used to provide transportation to all children, no matter where the child lives.

Chapter 15

108. Reynaldo F. Macias, et al. (September 1998). *How has the limited English proficient student population changed in recent years?* Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education. Available on the World Wide Web at http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu.

109. Position statement by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, "Supporting Bilingual Education," June 8, 1998.

110. However, only four of these states with eligibility policies allowing or emphasizing participation by children who do not speak English as their primary language—Kansas, Nebraska, Texas, and Washington—require programs to provide bilingual staff and/or bilingual classes.

Chapter 16

111. Christine L. Salisbury and Barbara J. Smith. (June 1993). *Effective Practices for Preparing Young Children with Disabilities for School*. ERIC Digest #E519. Reston, VA: ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education.

112. Karen E. Diamond. (June 1994). *Integrating Children with Disabilities into Preschool*. ERIC Digest. Urbana, Illinois: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.

113. Shelley deFossett, Editor. (May 1999). *Section 619 Profile*. Chapel Hill, NC: National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System (NECTAS).

114. A number of states may have additional, separate prekindergarten initiatives focused solely on children with disabilities and other special needs. However, these initiatives are not included in the definition of state prekindergarten initiatives used in this report and are not discussed in this chapter, other than in how they may be coordinated with state prekindergarten initiatives.

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Chapter 18

115. The state recognizes NAEYC or Head Start approval. Programs accredited by American Montessori or New England Association of Schools and Colleges are also accepted if they meet the requirements established by "The Connecticut Standards for Preschool and Readiness Programs."

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Appendix B

120. A CDA credential was the minimum requirement under federal Head Start standards as of 1998–99. However, these requirements were raised in the 1998 Head Start reauthorization. By September 30, 2003, at least half of all Head Start teachers in center-based programs across the country must have an associate, baccalaureate, or advanced degree in Early Childhood Education or a degree in a related field, with prekindergarten teaching experience.

121. Federal Head Start regulations also allow children to qualify if their families are receiving public assistance.

122. Programs accredited by American Montessori or New England Association of Schools and Colleges are accepted if they also meet the requirements established by "The Connecticut Standards for Preschool and Readiness Programs."

123. In addition to the initiatives described here, in FY 2000, Rhode Island will begin providing funds for a third prekindergarten initiative. Under the current proposal, the state would provide additional funding for Head Start and make funds available to child care programs to enable them to offer some of the comprehensive supports required by Head Start Performance Standards.

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